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THE

ENGLISH REVIEW

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# The Madness of the Arts (ii)

By W. R. Titterton

## PART II.

1

First the old fierceness went—fierce hate, fierce love.
Some men call Raphael soft; yet see what babes—
What fierce-eyed babes, what women—meek, yet strong!
And how the line curves round like carven steel!
Subtle da Vinci with his poised debate
Had yet a cold venom of strength about him.
And Botticelli's long-legged hoydens run
With all the coltish vigour of the spring;
And roaring Rubens' passion of molten flesh
Confronts the Spaniard's insolent restraint;
And all those twinkling Dutch interiors
Challenge you to the death for love of soap.
As for that burning blazon of the South,
That splendid livery of ardent tints,
Whose blue cries Brother to the sea and sky,
Never was painted love more blithely fierce.

No need to justify the poet's sword!
For whether Dante drave it
Up the hilt in Hell's remorse, or Chaucer
Tossed it like Tallifer before his spears,
Or Shakespeare bore it like the finger of doom,
Or those brave minstrels of the old romaunts
Upheld it like a knight should—or a saint,
It was the poet's touchstone, and his sign.

2

It passed, it passed!
And with that fierceness went the old belief.

Hot faith—
If only on the colour of God's sky;
But surely, too, in every-daily life,
In simple loyalties, in simple lusts,
In the strong sanity of common things;
And maybe in that crown of common things:
The simple sacrament of bread and wine.
Yet since the artist brooks no double rule,
(See art for art's sake by Israel Goldenheim)
Let's say the life that pressed around him then
Pored through his veins, and gave his voice its fire.

The old life passed—new manners, meaner men!
The knight—even the bravo
Wagered his will—and God's—against the Devil,
(Which Newton later would call "Gravity,"
And Darwin, twisting flowers around the horns,
And fitting surgical shoes upon the pads,
Would baptize "Evolution.")
But these new men went babbling down the stream,
Whoring to couplets and pert epigrams,
Rattling the dice-box for the drama's plot,
Doubting the world, the devil, and the flesh,
Doubting God more, doubting themselves the most,
Yet kept one spark of manly faith—they wore
Damnation with a martyr's elegance.

3

And that passed too; and England felt the flush
Of her Saint Martin's summer. Since her prime
Bloomed never such a glory of flaming flowers.
All graftings, maybe of the ancient stock,
All hothouse blossoms, fading as they bloomed!

Or did that breath, which stirred the dead in France,
And later broke the sleep of Italy,
Come with the promise of a second Spring?
A new world fierce and faithful as the old!
Who knows? For that Saint Martin's Summer faded,
And left this Phrygian legacy; this stool:
A few old gentlemen in swallow-tails,
Who measured rapture in a doctor's phial,
And valued poetry for its Norman blood.

They passed—
With all their sickly prettiness they passed;
And left us nothing but a sick desire.

When faith had failed, man built himself machines—
Machine-made pictures, verse, the photograph;
That Devil's advocate which shows the flesh
Item for item, and leaves out the soul.
See how infallibly the cog-wheels turn!
Now let the artist bravely face the fact!
Call it the truth? Agreed! You next demand
The cog-wheels should put on a pleasant smile . . .
Oh, sad result—almost a tragedy!
The cog-wheels get into the artist's brain!
And so the dear goes mad. He's raving yet—
Twiddling his thumbs and scribbling odds and ends—
One part sheer lunacy and nine parts muck.
Sells like hot cakes? He has the Devil's luck.

4

The world's gone mad. Those cog-wheels on the brain
Would drive the very best of worlds insane.
The wheels of God grind slowly, but not these
Yoked with our nerves, whose intricate mysteries
The swift steel mocks, with its triumphant spin.
And so a desperate madness wakes within
The soul of man. All we have lost seems nought;
All we have hoped—a shadow 'twas we sought.
Break, break, resolve! Crush the old world to mire,
Heap all tradition on a funeral-pyre!
Then watch the new world as per formula,
Rise like a Trotsky-Phœnix from the fire!
Does the experiment succeed? I'm told
The Phœnix-Trotsky's very like the old,
And finds the one thing needful once again
To yoke the whizzy cog-wheels in the brain.
We will not drive the simile too far,
But leave our Trotsky to his Polish war,
Since many a fast friend of the Bolshevic
Has looked on Wyndham's paintings and been sick.
(That's a rough phrase we'll struggle to amend.
It might do good, it's certain to offend.

Rather let's say friends of the Bolsheviki
Have looked on Nevinson's and found them sticky.)
Yet Nevinson's a literalist to some,
And Lewis far o'ertops to Berg of Bom,
Who does a zig-zag with a piece of chalk,
And calls it Belloc on a tavern walk,
Or works out Euclid, Book 1, 27,
And calls it Djagaleff's "Entrance into Heaven."

One plaudit for the madman's epitaph:
He fought against the infamous photograph—
That peeping Tom, who saw Love's nakedness,
And snapped her for the Gutta-Percha Press.
And in this cog-wheel age,
When Fact has flogged Truth, Beauty from the stage,
Small wonder that the poet lost his wit,
And slew his lady in his idiot rage!

The argument was sound:—Art should suggest,
Evoke, but not portray . . . You know the rest!
Old as the hills, of course!—The great tradition!
What need, then, of this limited edition
In vellum, with the inventor's autograph—
This obvious palimpsest,
This impudent imposition!
This strident puffing of a "modern" school
Which proves that Wordsworth was a blooming fool!

'Way with the rubbish?—Grazia!—Hack and burn!
But then return, return!
Back to the old sane ways your souls despise,
When God walked with man
Under the visionary skies.

Art must progress? Perhaps!—Must change for sure.
And yet I hear old dialects endure,
And Homer, Phidias, talk with Shelley's tongue,
And Aphrodite is for ever young,
And that diviner beauty of the Maid,
Humble and unafraid,
Shines as when Dante sung.

Art changes? Yes! These mixed their palettes so!
Those used a subtler method—or a worse;

## THE MADNESS OF THE ARTS

That music had a barrel-organ flow,
The surge of passion was in Shakespeare's verse . . .
Alliteration, assonance, chiming tags,
The proud blank verse—the rock made musical—
The great line ebbs and turns and brims and flags;
Yet chimes one scala in its rise and fall.

But you, you prate of intervals Chinese;
Experiment in tom-toms, nigger howls;
Study your plastic in the Cannibal seas;
And chant your dissonant verse with heaving bowels.

Behind you stretch the glories of your race,
Before you all the horrors they forswore—
Glories you spit on, horrors you embrace—
Monstrous squat idols with a vulture's face,
Loves that a devil bore.
Squeak go your penny whistles to a tune
The witches sang under a leering moon;
Your gibberish verse, with foul suggestions crammed,
Sounds like the dreadful ritual of the damned.
Better, perhaps, the meaningless refrain,
The jig-saw puzzle of a bloodless brain,
The childish patterns of a Moslem mind,
That dare not draw a face, lest it see God behind.
False to their creed? that leaves them well content,
Those facile traitors to a continent,
Renegades all, sinning against the light,
Bigging with shapeless monsters of the night.

Is it the end of all? Old Chaos come again?
Has all we fought for, died for, been in vain?
Must "Balaam's ass still have the best of it
And bray down saint and man and have no mercy,"
And vent his verses down a common drain?
Hark! With the discord a new piping's blent,
A plantive minor pipe of discontent.
Surely I hear the eternal orchestra
Strike up with tremulous experiment.
A new pulse stirs the world, the night grows grey,
Hags and Hobgoblins tremble, flee away;
With that first flush of rapture on his lips,
The Trumpeter of God salutes the day.

# The Poems of F. S. Flint

## By May Sinclair

Mr. Flint and Mr. Ezra Pound appeared together in the first Imagist Anthology of nineteen-thirteen. I think they would both still subscribe to the highly generalised principles the Imagists then laid down. But beyond this bare conformity all likeness ends. You could hardly find two poets more divergent in their interests and their manner, Mr. Pound tending more and more to an obscure and complex intellectual subtlety, Mr. Flint becoming steadily simpler, clearer, and more profoundly human.

There has been nothing premature in his development. In nineteen-nine the poet of *In the Net of the Stars* had not yet broken with tradition. He says in his *Palinode*:

> I have grown tired of the old measures whereto I have beat my song,

but he is using the old measures all the time.

Both by internal evidence and by their place in the volume you gather that these are his earliest experiments. In *The Mask of Gold* he has left off jingling. He is all for the grave beat of the iambic.

> You stood upon the threshold of your house,
> And the wind touched your hair and blew it so
> It caught my heart within a net. The blow
> Sent my blood whirling in a wild carouse.
>
> You said Good-night, and left me in the dark
> And the cold wind that stripped the polled trees bare. . . .

And so on and so on. These are orthodox iambics. They do not convey the irregular tremor of his discontent. "New rhythms are aching in my heart"; but he has not heard them, he has not caught them yet. A little later, and he is doing slight, beautiful things with the old rhythms, things that have a wistful, youthful charm and at times a youthful uncertainty of touch.

But in *Cadences*, published in nineteen-fifteen, he is

already far on the path where he is now. He has cleared his mind of mistiness; he knows what he wants to do; he has now a theory, the theory of Imagism.

From time to time, whenever the writing of verse has degenerated into a derivative, mechanical habit, following the lines of least resistance, when every phrase, every echoing cadence carries some familiar, worn-out association, when association itself has become a thing as generalised, as abstract as an algebraical formula, it has been necessary to revive and revise the theory of the art of poetry. It was done in England in seventeen-ninety-eight, when Wordsworth declared that the language of poetry should be "a selection of the language really used by men." He insisted that the poet should abstain "from the use of many expressions, in themselves proper and beautiful, but which have been foolishly repeated by bad poets till such feelings of disgust are connected with them as it is scarcely possible by any art of association to overpower." Wordsworth's aim and the Imagists' is to restore the innocence of memory as Gauguin restored the "innocence of the eye."

This was being done all the time in France when romanticist succeeded to classicist, Parnassian to romanticist, and symbolist to Parnassian; and when M. Gustave Kahn (if it was M. Gustave Kahn) wrote the first *vers libre*. It was done in America when Walt Whitman, regarding all that had been done before him, "Regarding it all a long while and then dismissing it," determined to "stand in my own place with my own day here"; and flung away rhyme and metre. But in England it had not been done since seventeen-ninety-eight, until in nineteen-thirteen the Imagists produced their principles of æsthetic.

In *Cadences* Mr. Flint is for the first time consciously and deliberately an Imagist. Imagism is, of course, open to the reminder that there is nothing new in it. Wordsworth was an Imagist when he said "Poetry is the image of man and nature." Imagism is, in fact, a return to reality, to direct vision. It is good-bye to the mere symbol (not good-bye to the metaphor, if to say with Mr. Richard Aldington that "the moon, a pregnant woman, Walks cautiously over the slippery heavens" is to convey a more striking image of the moon); good-bye to fancies and conceits; good-bye for ever to the abstract. Mr. Flint has

abandoned many of the devices he once employed. He no longer talks about bosoms "burning white in monstrancy"; no longer will he

> With horn and hue, with horn and hue and cry
> Chase the symbolic beasts throughout the sky.

You can trace the whole course of his development in his four poems on swans. The swan of nineteen-nine, "white rose of flame the swan beneath the arches," is himself, and the swan's song is his song of death. The image is merged in the symbol.

In the *Swan* of *Cadences* we have the visible image:

> Over the green cold leaves
> and the rippled silver
> and the tarnished copper
> of its neck and beak
> towards the deep black arches
> the swan floats slowly.

Only in the last three lines it becomes a symbol.

> Into the dark of the arch the swan floats;
> and the black depth of my sorrow
> bears a white rose of flame.

But the symbol and the image are kept separate and distinct.

And in *Cadences* there is yet a third swan. We have a "pool flaked with sedge, and a swan among water-lilies."

> . . . Its breast urges before it
> a sheet of sodden newspaper
> that, drifting away,
> reveals beneath the immaculate white splendour
> of its neck and wings
> a breast black with scum.

The swan is no longer the flame of his dream going under the dark arches; or, if it still stands as the image of pure beauty soiled and outraged by the filth of the medium it moves in, it is no symbol, but the thing itself, a real swan in a real world not worthy of it. And when you come to the fourth and last, the *Swan* of *Otherworld*, even this lingering shred of associated reflection is thrown aside, and you are left with the pure image, and with an emotion that is not tacked on to the contemplation of the swan but is an

invisible part of it. The poet in this last emergence is the seer of reality; he has become what Schopenhauer called "*der rein anschauende Subject*," the pure perceiver.

In nineteen-nine he is a young man moving about in a world of fancy that is not yet the world of his imagination, moving uneasily, with a vulnerable innocence, trembling on the brink of a realisation that never comes. The "new rhythm" never comes; it is an article of faith rather than an achievement. He communicates this sense of dissatisfaction, of uneasy postponement, so that the total impression of the book is of something tentative and incomplete.

It is far otherwise with *Cadences* of nineteen-thirteen–fifteen, with *Otherworld* of nineteen-twenty. The uneasiness, the sense of indefinite postponement are gone. He knows what he is going to do, and does it. He has found his new rhythm, and the break with tradition is decisive and final. In nineteen-twenty he is not obliged to go back on the work of nineteen-thirteen; he is only perfecting his method. Now, a writer who breaks with tradition is not bound to prove that his form is absolutely the best at all times and for all writers; it is enough if he can show that at the present time it is the best for him. If he can convey his perceptions and emotions more effectually in *vers libre*, which Mr. Flint calls "unrhymed cadence," if he can be more direct, and if his style has more dignity and more distinction than it had when he rhymed in recognised metres, he is justified in his practice. And he is justified in his theory if he finds that the rhymed verse of his contemporaries tends to be derivative, to fall back into some familiar cadence, to be saturated, not with fresh, direct, personal associations, but with an overpowering odour of stale literature.

Now if you read Mr. Flint's four Swan Songs in the order of their production, you will find a steadily reviving freshness and beauty, an increasing certainty of technique. In every quality of poetry—visible reality, emotional intensity, sensitiveness to the subtler rhythmical values, the last is superior to its predecessors.

> O Swan,
> My eyes watch you through the sallows,
> Wounded by your cruel beauty. . . .
> O white splendour,
> You have hurt me.

You do not heed us;
Our music crashes through the stillness;
Our shouts crack in the evening;
We gather round your pool:
The cygnets twist their swart heads
And their crimson beaks and listen;
But you do not heed them;
You do not heed us.

Your yellow feet move
Through the clear, cold water;
Your belly rests upon your belly,
Soft, cool, caressing;
Your beak meets your beak;
Your necks repeat the figures
Two, three, eight and zero.

O twi-shape, O triple nature,
Bird, fish and serpent,
Do you plunge your head
To lose your torment?
Does your beauty tire you?

The wind moves the leaves to a sweet sound;
It bends the sedge and the sallows;
The tulips sway and the iris;
But it brings to you the peace of curdled waters
Where you are no longer.

Or take this poem, *Hallucination*, from the earlier volume.

I know this room;
and there are corridors;
the pictures, I have seen before;
the statues and those gems in cases,
I have wandered by before—
Stood there silent and lonely
in a dream of years ago.

I know the dark of night is all around me;
my eyes are closed, and I am half asleep.
My wife dreams gently at my side.

But once again this old dream is within me,
and I am on a threshold waiting,
wondering, pleased and fearful.
Where do those doors lead,
What rooms lie beyond them?
I venture. . . .

But my baby moves and tosses
from side to side,
and her need calls me to her.

Now I stand awake, unseeing,
in the dark,
and I move towards her cot. . . .
I shall not reach her. . . There is no direction. . . .
I shall walk on.

There is no fancy here. There is imagination re-creating reality. I cannot imagine rhyme and metre adding anything to the poetry of it, to the poignant glamour. The thing *is* pure poetry. And I *can* imagine a conventional form dragging it down from its high place to something already dreamed, already rhymed about, substituting the cheap satisfaction of a definite musical close for the real mysterious halt, the magic somnambulism conveyed by the very structure of the verse.

For the poet has not done all his work when he has found the *mot juste*; the *mot juste* gives the colour of his thought, its form and movement can only be rendered by the form and movement of his verse. The modern poet requires a greater freedom of form and movement, not only because the prescribed metrical forms and movements have been used up, but because he has a larger heritage of emotions and ideas. It is not true that the stock of emotions or ideas is or can be exhausted; on the contrary, every age adds to it something of its own; and so far as these modern states of mind are subtler and more complex, they call for a subtler and more complex medium of expression.

His theory which he has stated in his Preface to *Otherworld* and his *Critical Essay on Modern Poetry* is this:

"There is only one art of writing, and that is the art of poetry . . . . There is no difference in kind between prose and verse. Since they are both words in order and both have rhythm, it is obvious that they are essentially the same."

Thus for the self-respecting "European of to-day" there are only two forms "which are really one, the first being prose, and the second I have called unrhymed cadence. The one merges into the other; there is no boundary line between them; but prose, generally, will be used for the more objective branches of writing—for novels, plays, essays, and so on . . . ; cadence will be used for personal, emotional, lyric utterances, in which the phrasing goes with a stronger beat, and the words live together with an intenser flame."

If we were to hold Mr. Flint strictly to account, we might ask him where, on the theory, will he find the

"prose" for writing novels and plays and essays in? And whether colloquial dialogue will come under the head of poetry? But let that pass. So far, Mr. Flint and Wordsworth are saying much the same thing. For though Wordsworth admitted metre it is clear that he did not regard it as the distinguishing mark of poetry. Here is Wordsworth: "A large portion of the language of every good poem can in no respect differ from that of good prose. We will go farther. It may be safely affirmed, that there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition."

To say that prose is any old words in any old order, and that poetry is "the best words in the best order" is certainly not to distinguish between poetry and prose. And to say that rhymed verse is the supreme medium of emotion is to deny the lyrical cry in such prose as the forty-first chapter of *The Golden Bowl*, the crucial scene between Maggie and the Prince. But when Mr. Flint maintains that there is no difference between prose and verse because both have order and rhythm, he is, to say the least of it, on very debatable ground. When prose has a bad rhythm, a jerky, dislocated rhythm; when it is a bald statement of uninteresting fact it is not—on Mr. Flint's own showing it is not poetry. When a reporter in the *Daily Mail* writes:

> Returning from the seaside, Robert Richardson,
> Aged seventy-nine,
> Fell down the steps leading from the Middlesbrough Railway Station,
> And died from his injuries,

he is using a decided rhythm, a rhythm that is not bad (as may be seen by arranging his lines in *vers libre*); and death, his theme, is one of great and tragic significance.

The same lyrist sings thus: "Injecting ether into children's muscular tissue is claimed by a Paris medical professor as a certain cure for whooping cough, telegraphs our Paris correspondent." Here his rhythm is hardly discernible. According to Mr. Flint and Wordsworth, is he writing poetry in the one case and not in the other?

And supposing he had wound up his first song thus:

> Fell down the steps leading from the Middlesbrough Railway Station,
> and died from his injuries:
> *Ave frater, atque vale,*
> (or even "Hail, brother, and Farewell!")

how is it, if Mr. Flint and Wordsworth are right, that those four words of indubitable poetry should come with such an absurd effect of incongruity? Where are we, really, with Mr. Flint's and Wordsworth's theory?

We shall see when we get down to its psychological foundations. Mr. Flint's axiom is that "the test of poetry is sincerity, and the test of sincerity is style, and the test of style is personality." Wordsworth's test is feeling. He defines poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings."

Now, if we set aside Wordsworth's definition, and adopt Mr. Flint's test as it stands, we shall be driven to the preposterous conclusion that, say, Mr. Herbert Spencer's style is the style of a great poet. It is sincere, it *is* a style of sorts, and it reveals a very striking personality. So that Wordsworth seems to be nearer the root of the matter with his "state of excitement." It is a question of thrills. On the other hand, he is defining the cause and the effect of poetry rather than poetry itself. If we admit rhythm as essential, rhythm as the special medium of the thrill, and if we distinguish between the emotion rendered (which is at once the cause and either the substance or the saturating element of the poem) and the æsthetic emotion, the pleasure it excites in us, we shall have improved on Wordsworth's definition; but our case will still be open to the objection that the rhythmic utterances of Ella Wheeler Wilcox induce in many minds a state of pleasurable excitement, an authentic thrill.

Clearly we must have some test that will rule out the *Daily Mail* reporter and Mr. Herbert Spencer and Ella Wheeler Wilcox. Though every poem must have "style," must be "personal" and "sincere," mere "personality" and mere subjective "sincerity" will not serve; therefore "style" will depend on our further test or tests. If we insist that poetry must have a certain intensity (the hysterical excitement of flabby poetasters is not intensity), that it must have direct contact with reality, we shall have set up a permanent distinguishing mark. We can then say: Poetry is the rhythmic expression of an intense personal emotion produced by direct contact with reality. The definition is not perfect, but it will at least save us from some bad pitfalls, and Mr. Flint will be as right as ever in

maintaining that rhyme and metre are not essential to it. Poetry is indistinguishable from any prose that has these three qualities of rhythm, intensity, reality. Where these are, there will be personality, there will be style.

If I have dwelt on Mr. Flint's theories so long, it is for two reasons: they have an intrinsic importance which it would be sheer impertinence to overlook, and they are carried out sometimes to the point of perfection in his practice. Everywhere in *Otherworld* we see the maturity of his talent, his method, his experience. As in *Hallucination*, we see his method in its subtle and intimate relation to his experience. He has developed a style, a revealing medium which is flesh and blood to his personality, refined and enriched by all that between nineteen-thirteen and nineteen-twenty he has felt and suffered and seen. The wistful, tentative uncertainty is gone; for better or worse the world is his realised possession.

The long poem that gives its title to the book is the most important, the finest and most mature thing that Mr. Flint has as yet accomplished. In spite of one or two minor, very minor, infelicities, it may stand as an almost perfect example of what can be done with rhymed cadence. It is written throughout with the simplicity and directness of natural speech; natural speech with a flame in it that shoots up now and again, but for the most part burns low, and is very steady and luminous; a flame that draws you close, so that you are thrilled and warmed.

The theme is simplicity itself. Otherworld is that part of the universe where the poet's dream is a reality; a theme based on the metaphysical idea (not so simple and by no means obvious) that in the infinite number of times and spaces and the infinite variety and combinations of their contents all things that are possible exist.

> Who will integrate space and time and prove that the sum
> Does not contain the quantity I describe?

He sees his other self living in Otherworld, the world that out of all possible worlds he has chosen. He has given to the simple, beautiful, unmysterious things that make up that world the glamour of his nostalgia and the poignancy of his desire.

. . . On the star the light of whose sun
Has not yet reached the earth and may never reach it,
I come in to breakfast clean of body and rich of mind,
And hungry with the morning air.
My boy sits before a bowl of purple wild pansies,
And my girl has a slender green jar of red poppies,
Whose hairy stalks spring from a blue cluster of speedwells.
They have been out in the fields, barefoot in the long grass,
The meadow foxtails brushing their legs with a silky touch,
And they shook the jewels from the heart of the clover
As they passed and sang with the birds.
They have seen the robin still on her nest in the ivy-hedge,
Looking at them from her ivy-leaf door
With stubborn, half-frightened eyes. . . .

In this world all human contacts are flawless:

Through the open inner door I hear in the next room
The rustling and stirring of my mate,
The mother of my children;
And she hears me, too, I know, but we do not speak:
Is there need to?
She knows the meaning of my silence,
And she will not jar the full cup of my morning treasures.

. . . . . .

My children, too, have learned to love my strange ways;
I hear their voices and they hear me
As I pass down to my walk in the orchard
Beneath the plum-trees;
But their door does not open.

You can hardly bear to look on at this happiness that is his and yet not his, so humble and so human that, if it is not attainable, it ought to be, and its absence is an indictment of the universe.

He is brought back from it suddenly.

My friend said to me as I marched by his side in the night
Through the mud of Waterloo Road,
"This is the finest draft that has ever left England,
Picked men, all non-commissioned officers, held back for months."
And the head of the column, out of sight away in the darkness,
Roared out a marching chorus
Taken up and humorously turned by the men in the rear.

. . . . . .

Four deep they went, strong young men,
Jesting and singing and laughing,
With broad backs bearing their packs,
And broad chests breathing great breaths of the cold, damp air—

. . . . . .

What was my friend doing there,
The singer of beautiful things, the beautiful singer?

And so on to the close, the repeated affirmation of the existence of Otherworld, and of "that other me."

He is sitting beneath a cherry-tree in bloom,
Watching the afterglow of sunset and the evening stars.

He is sitting in the quiet and peace of the evening
And the peace of the winds;
The darkness is creeping up behind him from the hills;
He does not stir; the first cold shiver of evening has not come.
Perhaps in this calm and the calm of his mind he thinks of me.

It is obvious that this is the sort of poem that, in this country, fifty, twenty-five, or even ten years ago, would infallibly have been written in blank verse, if not in some rhymed metre. But is there any mortal thing that rhyme or metre could do for it that its "unrhymed cadence" has not done? I can think of a few things: the substitution of a definite for an indefinite measure, forcing its speed to another pace, another pitch, to other stresses, not half so natural; and possibly the finality of the Handelian full close for its quiet, its almost imperceptible cessation. It is so that in ordinary reality a vision, a train of thought, an emotion ceases; not utterly, but with the sense that at any moment it may be repeated, recollected; it has psychological threads stretching out into the universe by any one of which it may be taken up again.

I say psychological threads and ordinary reality because it is in rendering psychological states, in presenting unaltered and unabridged the truth of ordinary reality, that the modern poet most shows his modernity; in sticking, that is to say, close to consciousness. If we are to compare new things with old, we shall find one thing gone from the modern world, the power to discharge emotion into bursts of music like Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*, or Swinburne's Choruses in *Erectheus*. In Mr. Flint's volume you will look in vain for such strains as once

Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn;

but for Mr. Flint to have written *Otherworld* in the form of the *Ode to a Nightingale* would have been as inappropriate as for Keats to have written his *Ode* in the form of his *Hyperion*. The delicate, subtle waves, the unfinished turn and return of his unrhymed, metreless cadence follow exactly the turns, the delicate, subtle curves of his emotion; their music is in every way as perceptible and as delightful to a sensitive ear. I said "metreless" cadence—that is not correct; where there is rhythm there will be some palpable beat, but it will not be gross, decided, or regularly

recurrent; it is too closely bound up with what the poet wants to say.

In his satire he is less accomplished, less fiercely and poignantly compact. *Hats* (Mr. Flint thinks that wars are made by men wearing hard hats), *Hats* has some vigorous lines, but it fails in cumulative effect.

> Towns battered and shattered
> Villages blasted to dust and mud,
> Forests and woods stripped bare,
> Rivers and streams befouled,
> The earth between and beyond the lines
> Ravaged and sown with steel
> And churned with blood
> And astink with decaying men.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> All in obedience to your voice;
> And the sound of your hat
> Is in the same gamut of void and thoughtless
> And evil sounds.

You feel that his righteous indignation is a taste (like the taste for war-bread) acquired in obedience to conscience, under abnormal circumstances.

There remain his admirable essays on *Contemporary French Poetry*, and *Some French Poets of To-Day*, his reviews of French poetry contributed to *Poetry and Drama* throughout nineteen-thirteen and fourteen, and his translations. There is no English man of letters who knows more of modern French poetic literature than Mr. Flint, or who has done more for the Intellectual Entente. He has not confined himself to the safe course of praising the already more or less known Verhaeren, Vielé-Griffin, Remy de Gourmont, Francis Jammes, Charles Péguy, and Paul Claudel; Jules Laforgue and Paul Fort: he was the first to recognise the talent of such younger and less known poets as Georges Duhamel, Charles Vildrac, Charles Cros, André Spire, Francis Carco, Pierre-Jean Jouve, Jules Romain, René Arcos, P. J. Toulet, to name only a few. His accomplishment within the limited space at his disposal is enough to reveal the just and finely sensitive critic that he is.

If you want to know about the origin, development, worth and significance of *vers libre*, you cannot do better for a beginning than read his *Contemporary French Poetry*, published in the *Poetry Review* for August, 1912.

If you want to know the art of translation at its higher levels, read his English versions of M. Jean de Bosschère's *The Closed Door*, of Emile Verhaeren's *Les Pauvres*, of Henri de Régnier's *Odelet*:

> Si j'ai aimé de grand amour,
> Triste ou joyeux.
>
> . . . . . .

If you had to choose between the new poets and the old, between, say, Mr. Flint and John Keats? Mercifully the hospitalities of the universe do not confront us with such alternatives, but if we were all three in the water, and if I were the only swimmer of the three, and if I could only save one of them—well, I suppose it would have to be John Keats. But I should not relinquish Mr. Flint without a struggle, or see him sink without a pang, an agony of regret for a fairly computable loss to literature.

# How Collister Came Home

By V. Quirk

He was ten years old when it happened.

He was sitting on the sand at Peel, naked and very wet. He had just been having a swim, and he was drying himself in the sun. His clothes lay on a piece of rock beside him.

He was staring at a sailing ship that lay moored to the quay, and it was then that the enchantment came upon him. For it was more than a desire: it made him forget everything except the need to go on that ship and sail away on her; it blotted out the consciousness of his father and mother, the fact of his childhood, and the thought of the future; it sent a shining to his eyes, and to his lips a small, enraptured smile.

He slipped his clothes on his still wet body, went aboard the ship, and asked the first sailor he came across if a boy were needed.

"Yes," said the sailor. "Go to the skipper."

In twenty minutes the ship set sail. His father's cottage was clearly visible from the ship. Smoke was coming from its chimney like breath from a human body. Within, his mother would be putting the kettle on and laying the table for tea. His father would be smoking, sitting by the fire. The children would be playing on the floor. But he was neither troubled nor afraid. The ship was going smoothly, and beyond him was the sea. It was all just as he had imagined. It seemed as though the blood of all his fisherman ancestors had collected together to flow through his veins and sing there. In a haze he listened to it. The enchantment was still upon him. On his lips was still the enraptured smile. It remained there, even when he was violently shoved forward, and told to find something to do.

Then began for him a time of incredible hardships. He bore them silently at an age when boys are still tucked to bed by their mothers, but he bore them hard. The men, once land was invisible, seemed to forget they had any

human relationships, and that the boy, by the very fact of his childhood, was deserving of consideration. They would not have treated a dog as they treated him. His dreaminess, his submission, and his complete inability to "answer back" seemed to goad them to cruelty. He was a "softy"! That was all.

So many days passed that he lost count of them. He screwed up courage one morning to ask a sailor how much longer they were going to sail.

"Australia," he growled in reply.

The word told him nothing. More days passed. He began to think they would never see land, and that "Australia" meant an endless sailing about. He thought of his mother, and ached for her as though he were a child not yet weaned. He thought of all of them, at home, in Peel. He thought and thought of them.

Then one day he heard a sailor refer to Australia as an island. His heart leapt. He pictured his own little island and smiled. Going to Australia, then, would be like going home. When he fell asleep he said, "Australia," as though it were a foreign word, which when translated meant home.

At last they reached Australia, landing at Sydney.

"Coming back?" asked the skipper, in his hoarse, gurgling voice that no amount of coughing could ever clear.

The boy hesitated. The thought was presented too suddenly. He had never pictured going back. What would his father do when he saw him? He was a fierce man when he was angry. Once, when he had run away just for a few hours, he had beaten him with a strap.

"Coming back?" shouted the skipper, enraged by his silence.

His dreaminess overcame him. He couldn't resist it. He couldn't bring words to his tongue. The picture of his father was more vivid than the actual man in front of him. He thought of his father.

"Are y' coming back?" asked the skipper, lowering his voice and coming towards him.

The boy remembered his coming out. No, he couldn't go back and bear it again.

He turned and ran from the ship.

Then he walked about the town wondering what to do. He looked in at the shop windows, but couldn't face the

thought of being an errand boy. The sea drew him. He walked back to the harbour.

A coaster lay at her moorings. He stepped aboard and asked if help were needed. Yes, they wanted someone to peel the potatoes and wash up. He could do both those things. He was taken on.

* * * * * * *

When he was eighteen he married. She was a woman thirteen years his senior, a big, bluff, laughing creature. She had been made love to by many sailors, but none of them had married her. She wanted to marry. What else could a woman do?

She found Dan Collister easy to manage. They went for a walk one evening when the air was golden and the sky navy blue. He was very easy to manage. She laughed in her sleeve.

With such a woman it was only natural that his happiness was short. Her coarseness tortured him. She made his life muddy. His days were bleak. It came to be that his only comfort lay in the thought of his home, far off in the Irish Sea. Some day he would go there.

After months of trying to do it, he suggested to his wife that they should go to Peel and settle there; he could be a fisherman like his father. His voice was so mild, and his face so impassive that she did not know that the beating of his heart was blinding him, and that he was holding his breath waiting for her answer. It would have made no difference if she had.

She laughed heartily, and told him not to start being a joker so sudden. If he wanted to go he could go by himself, and leave her and the children to starve. And she laughed again. Fancy going away to that bit of an island stuck God knew where, when he got on so well, and his money was so good. Though how he got on was a mystery to her. It was a mystery to many. There was nothing of the sailor about him, yet his way of managing a ship was marvellous. He hadn't to be told. He just knew. It was genius, that was all. But people do not connect genius with ships, only with the arts.

He never asked her again. He could have left her but not his children. They were like chains binding him.

They bound him to Australia. But he longed for the island as other men long for the best beloved woman.

One day, he left the ship in the same way as he had left it hundreds of times before. He walked towards his house as he had walked towards it hundreds of times before. But this time, when he reached the spot where his house should have stood, all that he saw was ashes, heaps of them.

The neighbours told him fearfully, avoiding his eyes, that his house had been burnt to the ground and his wife and children with it.

He didn't ask them how it had happened. He didn't speak at all. He only looked down at the ashes, wonderingly. There lay all he possessed. Nothing remained for him now, *but nothing bound him.* He was free. It was a terrible freedom, but it was freedom. He grieved, and he rejoiced. Despair swept over him, but another emotion crept into him and remained. It went to his brain, and settled in his heart. It stirred his very soul. He forgot the coaster of which he had been skipper seven years. He forgot everything but the one fact he was free to go home.

He walked down to the harbour.

There was a ship in. It was bound for Cardiff, not Liverpool, but that didn't matter. He asked the skipper if he wanted a seaman.

"No," said the skipper. "Full up."

Collister stood still, wiping his forehead with the back of his hand, and the skipper caught sight of the three legs of Man, tattooed in Indian ink, on his wrist.

"Stop," he said, "where are you from?"

"Been in Australia twenty-eight years."

"But where did you spring from before coming here?"

"Europe."

"What part?"

"England."

"What part?"

"The Isle of Man."

"What part?"

"Peel."

"What street?"

"Athol Street."

"What's your name?"

"Collister."

"Son of Bill Collister that married Mary Cregeen?"

"Yes."

"Put it there. Jump aboard. There's room for a Manxman."

When the ship reached Cardiff he left immediately for Liverpool, getting there in the early morning, and walked from the station to the river. He looked for the Manx boat, but there wasn't one, so he stood still, waiting. He could have asked when she would come in, but he knew he couldn't speak. For eighty miles away was the Isle of Man, and its nearness made him feel faint. He wanted to reach out his arms and touch it. His jaw hung loose and powerless like the jaw of a dying man.

He stood by the river till mid-day, but no boat came in. He hadn't eaten for two days, but he didn't look for a restaurant, he didn't want to eat. When night came, and there was still no boat, he didn't look for lodgings because he didn't want to sleep. He only wanted to wait. The long hours held no boredom.

He spent the night walking up and down by the river. There was no moon, and he couldn't see. The river had no smell, but he thought of the smell of the sea at Peel, and he licked his lips as though he were licking the salt from them. It was a cold, bleak night, and, reluctantly, the dawn came. He watched it coming. As soon as there was sufficient light he looked again for the boat. She was in! And her name was Mona, the island's ancient name. Mona! Mona! And only eighty miles away!

He didn't know when she would start, and he still couldn't speak to ask. He went aboard and waited again.

At eleven she started. There wasn't a soul aboard that he knew, but he didn't mind. He didn't want to know anybody. He didn't look for a cabin, in which he could lie down and sleep; he didn't want to sleep. He didn't go to the buffet to get some food; he didn't want to eat. He only wanted the old island, the old town, the old street, the old house.

All the other people were sitting about in groups. He stood by himself looking out to sea. He knew it would be four hours or more before the island would appear in sight, yet he couldn't prevent himself from looking out to sea, he was afraid of missing the first moment when the island

would be visible. Yet, when the moment came, he hid his face.

The boat reached Douglas. He walked to the station and took the train for Peel, and reached the old town, found the old street, stood by the old house. He leant against the wall, gasping for breath. Then he knocked at the door. Perhaps his mother would open it, people live long in Peel. His mother! His head swam.

He knocked again at the door. A very old lady opened it. His wild eyes searched her face. She was not his mother.

"Who lives here?" he said.

"I do."

"Where are Bill Collister and his wife?"

"Dead."

"Dead?"

"Come in and have a cup of tea. You're a Manxman, aren't you? I can hear it."

"Yes. I'm a Manxman. I'm Bill Collister's son."

"Well, now! Him that ran away a little fellow?"

"Yes, him that ran away."

"You never wrote to anyone and never sent a message."

"There was no one to send a message by, and I can't write."

She was very, very old, but her dim eyes saw his agitation.

"I'll just make you a cup of tea. You'll stay the night?"

"If it's not troubling you, I'll stay the night."

"Your parents' graves are fine. They're covered with fuchsias."

"Where are Rob and Tom, and Marget and Jane?"

"Jane's dead. Marget's married in Castletown. Rob and Tom are doing well in Liverpool. Ellen, Ned, and James—you've never seen them, have you?—are all in Manchester."

"None of them in Peel?"

"No, not one of them. Now, sit down. I'll be five minutes making the tea."

He drank two cups to please her, and when he went out of the house to go down to the shore, he felt as though the top of his head were moving upwards away from his body.

When he reached the shore he found the spot where he

had sat, those years ago, watching the ship. Children were sitting on it, making a castle. He expected them to greet him, he didn't know why, and moved away awkwardly when they disregarded him. Grown-ups passed him without a word. Their faces were calm. Couldn't they see he was Dan Collister come back to Peel? He saw some fishermen mending their boats, and his tongue went dry. Once he had watched his father mending his. Now his grave was covered with fuchsias.

The fishermen laughed and talked together. They did not look at him. They did not shake him by the hand. Yet he was Dan Collister come back to Peel.

Peel itself did not welcome him. There were English visitors everywhere and apartments to let. Peel was like a fishergirl in a smart town frock, awkward, arrogant and cold. He was shy of her. What would his brothers and sisters say to him, all with their separate interest ? He had imagined them still small, playing on the floor; and his mother, still busy, working in the kitchen, holding the youngest baby. There were fuchsias on her grave. He went back to the house, drank more tea to please the old lady, and lay down on the bed she had prepared for him. But he kept his eyes open till everything was still. Then he got up, crept silently downstairs, silently opened the door.

The old lady didn't hear him, for she was asleep. Nobody heard him, for all Peel was asleep.

He went to the station, but the last train had gone. So he walked to Douglas. It took him two hours to get there, walking quickly, and towards the end of the journey his breathing became difficult. But he did not look for a place to rest in. He walked straight to the quay—and waited, again. As soon as dawn came he looked for a boat again. It was Mona, again. He boarded her, and went up on deck and stood by himself, again, looking out to sea.

As the boat started an Englishman spoke to him.

"Been home?"

"No."

"Going home?"

"No."

"Where are you off to?"

"Australia," he answered hoarsely.

# Letters: Posted and Unposted (v)

By Constance Malleson

## POSTED

14

CLIFF COTTAGE,
LYNMOUTH,
N. DEVON,
*December 30th*, 1918.

Yesterday we walked to Hunter's Inn; all along the cliff path which hangs above the sea. Such heights, and depths—and such emptiness! I do love those queer black looking birds that loop the loop and then turn completely over and lie chortling on their backs. I re-read Strindberg's "The Father" last night. It seems a bad translation that I've got hold of, but it's fine acting stuff nevertheless. Only how dull his stage directions are!

My Dear, I don't think you are ever out of my thoughts for very long, I have such a love for you. I wish you could get one breath of real country, before attacking the new year. Why don't you, now, at once, snatch next week-end among your own hills? It would be so good for you.

---

15

CLIFF COTTAGE,
LYNMOUTH,
N. DEVON,
*December 31st*, 1918.

Darkness here is wonderful! You've no idea. From across the water, the two eyes of Wales, shining; below, far below, caught in a dark maze of tangled trees, the lights of Lynmouth; overhead, the myriad starry eyes of heaven.

You know, you're a difficult person to write to, because I don't like to express *your* self, I haven't really the right; and to express myself, is presuming an attitude in you which is so rare in human nature as to be practically non-existent.

Bless you! my dearest dear. MOYA.

16

Cliff Cottage,
Lynmouth,
N. Devon,
*January 1st*, 1919.

A wonderful walk yesterday, through "Cat and Fiddle" country (you know the "Cat and Fiddle" in the Peak Country, don't you?)—only coming back again to the sea. Almost the first day that we haven't got wet through. Blue overhead, and the sort of glorious shining clouds that go careering up the sky—I call them Merrow Down clouds, because I've seen them more perfect there than anywhere else.

When I said you were difficult to write to, I was thinking of the sort of feeling one has often had, when one's been given too much love. One gets to feel like James Stephens' "The Rebel"; a sort of "I-must-be-I" feeling, a kind of tearing and smashing into freedom.

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17

Cliff Cottage,
Lynmouth,
N. Devon,
*January 3rd*, I think, 1919.

Your dear letter just come. What rubbish you do talk, about yourself.

Dear One, don't feel miserable. It's not for ever, this black cloud. You must have faith. All the love in my heart, and all the strength of my whole being is going out to you, Dear, for just as long as you need it, and no longer. These days, I have often thought that it would be good to be old; to be beyond the tearing hunger and the striving. You must have felt that. My love is all about you, and my thought always for you.

---

18

Cliff Cottage,
Lynmouth,
N. Devon,
*January 4th*, 1919.

I suppose that my love is not different from all love, in that it seems to range from end to end of all experience.

It sweeps like a great wave from the very summit of reserve and control, away to the splendid deeps of surrender. There are times when I want to walk with you in the noonday clarity of impersonal things—and times, when I would see the world crash to ruin, for the swift brushing of your lips against mine in the wild throb of Night. And though I want to fold you in my arms and smooth the tiredness from your brow, and though I would watch over you and never stir through all the night time, lest you should waken from your dreams, yet, there come moments when I want almost to hurt you, to wring from you a very agony of pain.

You say that the thousand or so letters that you wrote to Anne from France are not fit for publication! In ways of expression, I think I am shyer and more civilised than you. I clothe with words my heart's desire, because it seems somehow too fearful and holy a thing to go uncovered, by light of day. My letters are appallingly fit for publication!

---

19

CLIFF COTTAGE,
LYNMOUTH,
N. DEVON,
*January 5th*, 1919.

MY DEAR,

It's so beautiful here to-night. The long French window is open. It is high tide, and the moon is full. A perfect set for the third act of "Nan." Hanging high over Countisbury Hill, the moon is shining right across the sea. Through the open window comes the sound of waves beating and breaking and curving along the shore, all the way to Sillery Sands.

At night, the wind whistles and howls round my corner room here, just as it used to about my turret room in Ireland. There were flights of Canadian geese on the lake at home. Do you know their cry? Some people will tell you that it's an ugly cry, but I love it; it's harsh . . . and lonely . . . and wild.

One does lose something . . . going through life. I used to be much more splendidly independent than I am now; more like the "Non merci" speech in Rostand's "Cyrano." Only that usually goes with a certain

uncharitableness and lack of understanding—and cruelty is, I think, only permissible in the very young.

* * * * * * *

I wonder why I write to you? What I want to say . . . can't be said, in words . . .

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20

CLIFF COTTAGE,
LYNMOUTH,
N. DEVON,
*January 8th*, 1919.

I'll be back soon after this letter is with you. And perhaps in the evening I'll see you. I know the mood you are in. Dear One, I understand so well. And O, I do love you beyond all words. My heart stirs to life at the thought of you. The living warmth of my body and soul is yours. I bless you and kiss your dear, dear eyes.

If we dine together, I'll come and call for you about 7.45. My Dear—

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21

CLIFF COTTAGE,
LYNMOUTH,
N. DEVON,
*January 9th*, 1919.

With the last night here, a queer hushed silence has fallen on all my thoughts. Only my heart lives on in the great stillness; my heart beating low and strong, for you, for you——

---

22

EDWARDES SQUARE,
*January 11th*, 1919.

This morning, when first I woke, I thought I was still in your room. My heart was full to overflowing with the love of you. The blessedness of your arms was all about me . . .

I had a wonderful walk home. Birds were singing somewhere near your house, and I stopped to listen to them and to bless their warm little souls. When I came beneath the shadow of Big Ben, he was gleaming like the Holy Grail, and the spires and the scaffolding seemed like a

great forest of knightly spears marching gloriously . . . Beloved, the thought of you makes the whole world shine.

---

23

EDWARDES SQUARE,
*January 13th*, 1919.

MY DEAR,

You will be in chaos this week with all your work.

My thoughts are with you all the time—and my heart is loving you. If there were a God, I'd keep him awful busy listening to my prayers for you! Bless you, Dear One.

MOYA.

---

24

EDWARDES SQUARE,
*January 13th*, 1919.

"How do I love you?
I do not know.
Only because of you
Gladly I go.

Only because of you
Labour is sweet,
And all the song of you
Sings in my feet.

Only the thought of you
Trembles and lies
Just where the world begins
Under my eyes."

IRENE MCLEOD.

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25

EDWARDES SQUARE,
*January 13th*, 1919.

An absurd thought that you might look in to-night and find me gone makes me scrawl this little line. Just in case you should come, my dear. Let me know if I can be of any help with work, or with anything at all. Otherwise, I shan't expect to see you till the storm of work has a little abated.

I am so happy in loving you.

(*To be continued.*)

# Final Solution of the Sphinx

By Horace B. Samuel

I do not say that I have solved the secret of the woman, but I have certainly solved the secret of the Sphinx.

As I lay couched in the night, plumb at her feet, from the stone lips of the majestic maw of the beast came forth in words and in vision the sinister veracity.

And this is how it happened.

Having dined with Zoya Vasilitsky at the Continental Hotel, I abducted her as we had arranged in a motor-car. Not to the other end of the world, or even the spacious privacy of the desert, but just to dabble for a while in moonlight and the Sphinx.

Zoya Vasilitsky was a Russian Jewess, but more Russian than Jewess. She had well assimilated that Tchekovian type of morbidity which had been the rage among the intelligent during her student years in what was then St. Petersburg. Her soul was always poisoned by a chronic nostalgia for the devil knew what. She had short, black, Bolshevistic hair and the face of a young white sorceress. She dressed with success like a schoolgirl, was mistaken for a disguised Princess by unsophisticated Colonels, and had a husband absent somewhere in the wild imbroglio of kaleidoscopic Russia. At times the rainbow of an elfin playfulness would dance prettily through the grey mists of her melancholy. Or was the whole thing a deliberate manipulation of provocative coquetry? One never knew, and so one continued on in that fascinating environment. During the dinner she had been piqued and distrait, or had pretended to be piqued and dabbled in being distrait, murmuring in Russian, "My God, how I am bored!" even during the most sprightly passages of the band or the most succulent moments of the entree. And then she had exhibited jealousy of the scarlet Arabic grammar which I had on the table and which had been the cause of my being just three minutes late for the appointment.

But as the motor-car swung on and on, and the white flat band of road swam swiftly under us, there sprang up between us just a shadow of rapprochement. Just past the Mena House Hotel we descended and fought our way to the left through the greasy horde of pestering touts with their white epicene robes and their impudently efficient English.

"Let me tell you your fortune, yours and your lady's. I am Moses, I am the limit."

Objurgating in my best Arabic the sacred anatomies of his mother and his mother's mother, I dispelled the creature. Zoya and I went on, exchanging the badinage of mild philandering.

"You are still thinking," she said, "of your beastly Arabic grammar. It is too awful; am I not more interesting than an Arabic grammar?"

"Rather more interesting on the whole," I replied. "There are only two variations of the Arabic grammar, but the variations of your character are infinite."

And then suddenly the vast stone presence sprawled above us. Its very size invested it with a certain bestial divinity. The end was invisible from where we were. One had the idea of a creature crouched over the whole desert, a slumberous, treacherous giant basking in the moonlight. The first brutal features of some drastic deity gazing implacably forward from its oblong throne. Was its potency exhausted? Was it really obsolete? Did it retain, perhaps even now, just an infinitesimal scintilla of its former magic?

We set ourselves to explore, journeying to the west, and I decided to challenge it. Picking up a pebble, I hurled it at the monster. It ignored the blasphemy. I climbed up on to the plinth and strode insolently about over the grey back. I struck a match on its haunches. The thing still continued its sinister slumber. I returned to Zoya, who greeted me with a shower of stones.

The problem of Zoya superseded in my mind for the moment the problem of the Sphinx.

I approached her triumphantly, only to find myself eluded by the white figure which tripped neatly past me over the shingle, hissing with gentle irony: "Who is it?

I don't know you—go away please. I don't speak to strangers."

For some minutes she continued her curious and infantile frolic. I turned away, and we met again as though by chance straight in front of the blind gaze of the adamantine visage. Was it my imagination or were the features a trifle less . . . As though taking a sensual delight in the white caress of the moon's fingers? Or conferring its ironic blessing on our fantastic escapade. She hailed me as though encountering the merest social acquaintance in the lounge of the Continental.

"Oh—how do you do?—delighted to meet you."

"Madame Vasilitsky, I believe," I said, knowing her caprice.

Suddenly I placed her on the stone and sat down at her feet.

And as the moon played on the Sphinx, even so her eyes seemed to play upon mine with a flood of white sympathy and mocking laughter. We chattered fantasies.

"No, I don't like you because you are red; as red as your Arabic grammar." And snatching it from my pocket, she hurled it into the sand.

"It is the white in you that appeals to the red in me. Mix red with white—"

"Stop, stop!"

"I definitely refuse."

But she shrank back into a bristling hedge of outraged conventionalism. For a few minutes the conversation lapsed. And then beneath the graven benediction of the Sphinx, the moon within her played out on me again.

"Will you hire camels and take me into the desert?"

Wondering whether she were serious, I hesitated for a minute.

"You hesitate! You don't believe me. You don't trust me. How dare you be so insulting? I shall certainly not come with you now. How could I have made so foolish an offer? Let us go away, it is not convenient to remain here any longer."

"Zoya, Zoya, I cannot make you out. It is easier to solve the riddle of the Sphinx."

"Then you shall stay here all night and solve it. Never,

never shall I forgive such an insult. No, I don't want your escort. It is not convenient."

We walked back to the motor-car, hostile and frustrated.

"No, you shall not come back with me. Study your Arabic grammar. Stay with your Sphinx. When you have solved the secret of the Sphinx, then it will be time for you to try and solve my secret."

"On camels—in the desert?"

"Oh yes, of course, on camels in the desert—when you have solved it."

"All right. Agreed. I will solve it."

"You are very confident, as always. Too confident, I think. And very, very chivalrous."

I doubt if she really thought that I would actually take her at her word. But my blood was thoroughly up and I was determined to annoy her. To counter her pique with my pique, her caprice with my caprice.

A few directions to the driver and all that was left of Zoya Vasilitsky was the red tail light of the motor-car vanishing into the distance.

Not quite sure whether I had been dignified or ridiculous, I strolled sulkily back to that stone secret whose mystery I had sworn to penetrate.

I began, moreover, to wonder if after all I really did want to take Zoya Vasilitsky into the desert—on camels—for how long—to what preposterous oasis?

In point of solid fact, the woman actually was as much a devil as the Sphinx. In that case, of course, the difference between my position and the good old Thebans was simply this. Whereas they were devoured by the monster if they failed to solve the riddle, I should probably be devoured by her if I succeeded. On camels—in the desert.

By now the place was almost entirely deserted. The greasy brutes of guides had scampered off to their lairs. All that was left was a hospital sister giggling to a Staff Captain. "Upon my word, it's queer, and makes one feel queer, too."

And then they, too, disappeared. Into the desert—on camels? No. More probably just back to Cairo in the accommodating taxi.

I was left alone with my enemy. I walked round it and

tried to take its measure. I got in front of it and stared it squarely in the face, only to feel oppressed and just a trifle frightened by its gigantic scale.

I threw a stone at it (as I had done earlier in the night) to recover my confidence. I lit a cigarette from its flank and began to conjure up its immemorial spirit with modern flippancies.

"Come on, old mole. What the devil are you? Come on, now, be a sport. If I can't find out your damned old secret, how the devil am I to take Zoya Vasilitsky into the desert—on camels?"

But the age of miracles was apparently past. No voice was vouchsafed unto me. Not even a professional priest of the temple muttered intimidating oracles from some hidden recess behind the deep curved lips. The flat visage simply stared majestically blank.

Dismissing, more through sheer laziness than any other motives, a very sensible inclination to spend the night at the Mena House Hotel, I lay down on the ground about twenty yards in front of the face, scooping the sand up into a pillow and covering it with my Burberry.

I gazed once more at the great squareness. And this time the vastness seemed protective and consoling. The wrinkled lips seemed wreathing into an almost confidential smile. I trusted it; I surrendered my ego.

"Dear Sphinx, give dreams of truth."

Kaleidoscopic thoughts ran in a disorderly parade across my brain. A camel bell twinkled in the far distance.

"Zoya Vasilitsky—into the desert—on camels—to what preposterous oasis? 'If you want to solve my riddle, you must first solve the riddle of the Sphinx.'"

And then, very slowly, the colossal lips opened.

And from the maw of the god hundreds of men and women leapt straight out on to the starlit sand.

The acolytes of the deity.

But I was surprised to observe that so far from being mummies or even clad in archaic Egyptian costume, they wore just the normal dress of the twentieth century. Ordinary European dress, moreover, and not at all adapted to a tropical climate. And after greeting each other in perfectly casual tones, they spread themselves out round the Sphinx into a huge circle. The rites of the dæmonic wor-

ship were about to commence. But what strange gestures were these? For producing from pockets and flaps, fountain pens and writing pads, they approached the monstrous object of their adoration in the freest and easiest manner imaginable, scrambled up on to the plinth, squatted down, cast at the Sphinx an extremely perfunctory glance, and began to write.

What was the meaning of this strange procedure?

Perhaps it was that the Sphinx was something of an exquisite in the matter of worship?

It was really quite intelligible that, on the same principle as really classy monarchs refuse to wear twice the same lounge suit, or the same top hat, a really *raffiné* deity would insist on being worshipped every time with a new prayer. A special prayer for each worshipper.

And then, sporadically—without order—interrupting each other without compunction and each starting at a different place, they began to recite these new litanies. Recite? Scarcely. Rather to rattle and gabble them off with the fluency of professional priests working against time or those hired deadheads of a Jewish liturgical quorum known technically under the designation of minyan men.

By straining my ear I was able to detect certain phrases which seemed to occur with faithful repetition and were, no doubt, the keynotes of the prayer. For many of them, though not all, were common to each narration:—

"Majestic monster"—"the Sphinx gazed unwinkingly at Eternity"—"the riddle of the Sphinx"—"the inscrutable and immortal Beast"—"couched amid the lone and level sands and not a thousand yards away from the modern caravanserai of the Mena House Hotel"—"truly christened one of the Seven Wonders of the World by the Pagan Greeks"—"triumphantly challenging time and very little changed from the epoch of Rameses and the period of Napoleon when the impact of a cannon-ball had seriously damaged its majestic nose"—"bathed in the mystic rays of the moon"—"the two lovers felt to the full the awful fascination of the marble monster."

And then the huge flanks of the Sphinx gave a convulsive shudder. A colossal groan of anguish reverberated throughout its structure. It rocked to and fro in the martyrdom of its torment. And suddenly, from head, flanks

and back, rained forth a shower of golden backsheesh on to the eager crowd, who, abandoning their recitation, jostled one another brutally and dived down into the sands in the sharp ecstasy of their competitive avarice.

But, emitting a huge roar, the Sphinx broke the traditional immobility of three thousand years. Spreading its flapping wings and rearing straight up on its feet, it charged straight down upon the throng, trampling some with its hoofs, striking others with its wings, swallowing others in its extended jaws, and then it turned to me, as I lay stretched upon the sand—fascinated—apprehensive—but, above all, puzzled.

And somehow or other—and without appearing in the least strange—the face of the colossus was the face of Zoya Vasilitsky. "Will you come with me into the desert—on camels?"

I hesitated for a minute, wondering if the Sphinx were serious. And then I found myself absolutely, quite as a matter of course, lifted up in the shadow of immense wings and then into the desert—on a camel—with the Sphinx on another camel—trotting along comfortably by my side.

And as we journeyed on to that fantastic oasis, the Sphinx yielded up to me that secret which already I was on the point of guessing.

"My God, how I am bored—I am played out—you see now what I have come to—the supreme degradation—in the good old days I was a king—and according to the local custom, promoted myself into a God—a symbol of energy—of power—of kingship—a creditable *tour de force* of really successful anthropomorphism—yes, I dominated them and exploited them as a King, and I dominated them and exploited them still more as a God—why, I would think nothing of a thousand calves for dinner and a hundred slaughtered virgins as an hors d'œuvre for breakfast—and then other deities came along—and I was first starved of my ordinary necessary diet—and then shoved on to this damned menial job—to be just a hack literary property—the trite theme of the authors of third-rate novelettes—a convenient lay figure just chucked in with the local colour to embellish some twopenny-halfpenny love story—a piece of mystery mechanism used so often that there was soon nothing mysterious about it at all—a battered Secret de

Polichinelle—no, I was no mystery, but simply the notorious personification of mystery—I was no secret—I was simply its stock metaphor—I am no silence, but I am simply the epithet of silence vociferated aloud by a thousand tongues—I never smile, but I am the synonym of the smiling villain in melodrama, or just as I am the stock synonym for the soul of the temperamental female—it is true, a few beams of light illuminated the dull drudgery—Robert Hichens' hero was mildly diverting with his *détraqué* stunt of philosophic thererastia, and I experienced a certain sad pleasure in Oscar Wilde's epigram about woman—but now things are getting worse and worse—my pedestal is sinking—sinking deeper and deeper into the sandy journalese of the authors—those sordid money-grabbing *maquereaux* of my promiscuous and prostituted mystery—oh, my God, let me go further on—into the desert—on camels."

The features of the Sphinx grew more and more like the features of Zoya Vasilitsky.

And so we journeyed on. And sometimes she was fond and sympathetic—sometimes she pelted me with the stones of derision—and sometimes she eluded me—yes, just as I had at length reached the fantastic oasis. "I do not know you," she said. "Who are you? It is not convenient to be addressed by strangers."

And as, stung by the provocation, I rushed in red fury upon the white mist of her phantom, I just looked up to find myself sitting on the sand at the staring Sphinx.

Yes, there was no doubt about it—its magic had evaporated like the dew. In the cold, hard air of the morning sun I knew the Sphinx for what it really was—a poor prostituted platitude, a grandiose banality, a colossal *cliché*.

I walked to the Mena House Hotel, had a bath, breakfasted, and wrote my story. I travelled back to Cairo by the electric tram.

Well, at any rate, having solved the fantastic riddle, I had won my fantastic wager. Would she have sufficient sense of honour or of humour gracefully to accept the penalty or privilege of my victory?

When, however, I called upon the lady, she pelted me with reproaches for despatching her home unescorted.

When I read her the story, she expressed genuine in-

terest in the part concerning the Sphinx, but insisted that I had completely failed to understand even ever so little of her own character. And then she said that she liked it—and then—as an afterthought—that she had never been so insulted in her life.

And when I asked her when she was coming with me into the desert—on camels—according to her solemn promise given at the Sphinx, she retorted angrily: "Never will I forgive you—never, never. Besides, I never went with you to the Sphinx—it would not be correct—you are flattering yourself."

And I do really flatter myself that I have solved the secret of the Sphinx, but I know that I have not solved and never shall solve the secret of the woman.

# The Need for Imagination in Women

## By Cicely Hamilton

VERY few, I imagine, will contradict the statement that our present civilisation can be saved to the world only by an effort of mankind. That effort will have to be both strenuous and patient; and to its making must go something more than goodwill—the utmost intelligence of humanity. We cannot afford to leave idle and derelict any force that may control—however slightly—the impulse to destroy which is the natural expression of the mass-mind stirred to emotion. Half-a-dozen years of mass-emotion and mass-action have laid great part of Europe in ruins and shaken the foundations whereon human society is builded—and the process of destruction appears likely to renew itself indefinitely. The "vicious circle" is not confined to wages and the cost of living; politics, internal and international, consist largely in the organisation and counter-organisation of mass-emotion—that is to say, in the welding of explosive material into efficient fighting-machines. All organisations are fighting-machines; and, so far, our only method of dealing with the tyranny of one variety is to set up another against it—produce bellicose Labour as a check on bellicose Nationality . . . The real problem, perhaps, being how to disorganise the mind of humanity; how induce it to tear off its labels, forgo its destructive mass-action, think constructively and not to order.

Be that as it may, it is clear that Society in peril from its own destructive impulses has a right to expect some help from that section of humanity which, because it bears children—gives life—should esteem life highly, hold bloodshed and slaughter in abhorrence. The direct influence of the mother of men—so at least we were told in days gone by—would make for the peace of the world. There was a "protective instinct" much talked about at one time . . . and which, so far, has been curiously inactive—ineffectual and modestly silent. The woman pacifist, for instance, would seem, for the most part, to be a replica of her male colleague; as good a fighter, and with little indi-

cation of a point of view that in any way differs from his. Hardly in one have I come across a trace of the difference that must exist between the outlook and attitude of the man who hates war, and the woman; the difference, that is to say, between the outlook of the born non-combatant and of one who is potentially a fighter. How the difference might express itself is another question; but it exists and would find expression if women were more honest with themselves. . . . Those who belong to the fighting half of humanity have the right, if they will, to belittle the emotion which impels their fellows to offer their lives for a cause; but if the protective instinct, the sense of the supreme value of life, were a reality in woman—an effective reality—their opposition to war would come from a different motive; it would come from a sense of the splendour of the sacrifice and the unworthiness of society—their own unworthiness—to accept it. Opposition so motived might be no more successful than previous efforts to quell and master the indomitable fighting spirit; but at least it would be something new in the history of pacifism. And it would have this merit; it would be founded in humility, not arrogance.

Neither man nor society in general has any right to expect from those who are new to public interests and habits of thought a sudden and definite lead on matters which have torn and perplexed humanity since humanity existed upon earth; but what we have a right to expect is a stirring of heart amongst women in the face of a world catastrophe. With, as its natural result, anxiety for the future, enquiry, the quickening of imagination—and a casting about for ways and means of ensuring the safety of the generation to come. Which, with time, and experiment—and preliminary failure—might mean help . . . That is all we should expect, so far; but we have a right to expect that.

There were not many signs of it during the war; and it may be that much of the routine and organising work done by women was done all the better by reason of a narrow outlook, a capacity for interesting themselves only in the business in hand, for putting the war aside while they worked at their important little bit of it. Lack of imagination has its very practical uses; there are times when it is advisable to take short views and live from day to day. Where the reverse side of the quality showed itself was in

the frequent inability to realise suffering at a distance, the persistent "business as usual" attitude in the matter of extreme femininity. One of the minor phenomena of the war was a rapid deterioration of the journals devoted to women's interests, where an outburst of baby-talk concerning "undies" and flirtations was a curious commentary on the filth and flame of the trenches. If the mass of our countrywomen had been even slightly imaginative they would have regarded it as an insult to the dead, and the living who had lost them, that an evening paper, when the war was at its fiercest, should tuck into small print at the end of a column the announcement that so many hundred names had appeared on the day's Roll of Honour—and devote the rest of the page to an article extolling monkey-fur as a means of feminine adornment. No doubt the evening paper knew its feminine public—and knew that it was not imaginative. Had the protective instinct, the sense of the sacredness of life, been a vital factor in the average Englishwoman, the editor of the journal in question, as a mere matter of business, would have given more importance to the roll of the dead and less to the charms of monkey-fur.

The tradition of centuries is not broken and cast off in a year or two; and the persistent indifference of women, as a class, to the happenings that do not immediately concern them is the natural result of the age-long tradition which barred them from interests that were not narrow and domestic. It is an indifference not confined to the women of any one race; as I learned in Cologne, in the Hauptstrasse, on the day the news came through of the sinking of the German fleet at Scapa. The newsboys shouted it wildly as "Heroism of our Navy—Destruction of the Whole German Fleet!"—and men rushed and struggled to grab at their wares, and thanked God aloud as they read . . . Yet of all the many women who were shopping and strolling in the Hauptstrasse only one bought a paper—myself. I stood for nearly ten minutes and watched—and so long as I stood no German woman had a penny to spend on the news. I should have thought it stranger if I had not remembered how few of the British women I knew in France ever troubled about the communiqués—even when the outlook was blackest, in the March retreat of 'eighteen.

## NEED FOR IMAGINATION IN WOMEN

The reading of newspapers is neither a guarantee of intelligence, nor a proof of imagination; but there is something almost terrifying in the thought of a concentration on personal surroundings so complete that it quenches interest —even curiosity—concerning the agony of thousands. A protective feminine instinct that cannot be stirred to the expenditure of a copper and a minute of time in order to ascertain whether men have perished with their sunken fleet or an army is still at death-grips—a protective instinct so limited must be limited also in its workings.

In view of the progress of scientific destruction, it is no exaggeration to say that the continued existence of a civilised world depends on the introduction into the counsels and dealings of humanity of an influence that will make for peace. It has been claimed that woman in politics will provide such an influence; but it is as yet too early to say that the process of organisation, inseparable from politics, will not act upon her as it acts upon her brother. Can she form part of the political fighting-machine, the national fighting-machine, the class fighting-machine—and restrain herself and her organisation from fighting? Is she temperamentally a non-combatant? Or is she a non-combatant only because she has not hitherto been subjected to the organising, combative influence—been carried away by that sense of membership which, where men are concerned, puts arms into the hands of the gentlest? Is she peaceful only because she is unorganised, without sense of fellowship and membership, indifferent to the public interest? And will she, become crowd-conscious, respond, like the crowd-conscious man, most readily to the stimulus of hate? So far in the world's history the only method of holding men firmly and actively together has been by providing them with something to hate and attack; the common hatred is the bond that unites man and man. Out of the need for the common hatred have been fought innumerable wars . . . Can cause or community hold together without it? On the answer to that question may depend the existence of our world.

Man, so far, has found no difficulty in combining his private gentleness and honour with his public hatreds and injustice. He accepts and practises a double standard of morality—his own, the standard of the decent indi-

vidual and the lower morals of the crowd-life. As an individual he will keep his lips clean from slander; as a Liberal, Unionist or Labour man he will read with approval when his morning paper distorts the motives of a leader on the opposite side. As an individual the shedding of blood is forbidden him; as member of a commonwealth the shedding of blood may mean to him a sacred duty. The conscience of the organisation—be it nation, Church or class—is always below that of the average decent individual; the collective being, of whatever type, tends naturally to jungle law. For the simple reason that its own advantage is its aim and its highest good; altruism has hardly entered into the ethics of the self-conscious crowd. It makes demands upon the altruism of its members—and thereby stills their consciences; but, itself, it is purely egoistic. Therefore, when man, the individual, resigns himself to the influence of the crowd-life, he accepts, unwittingly, the standard of an entity whose morals are primitive and brutal . . . And, whatever we may hope, we have no right to demand that the sense of membership should not act on woman as it has acted on man; that she should not accept and practise his double standard of morality; that she in her crowd-life should not react—as he reacts—to the destructive stimulus of hatred.

If she does not, it will be because the protective instinct is a reality; strong enough in the generality of women to overcome the demoralising tendencies of the crowd-life with its undeveloped morality and ultimate resort to club-law. It may be that aggression and hatred are permanent and ineradicable factors in the communal life of mankind, that an essential feature of comradeship is the knowledge that others are not comrades—that fellowship must be balanced by enmity. It may be that the raising of the standard of crowd-morality would mean that the permanent combative instinct must seek its outlet elsewhere—in the life of the individual. But, at least, an experiment is worth trying; must be tried if humanity is to hold on to civilisation.

If the protective instinct in women is to be made effective, it can only be through a development of the imaginative faculty; that is to say, through a realisation of what the crowd-impulse uncontrolled will mean to them-

selves and their children. In the way of starvation by blockade—as the weapon of nation or class; in the way of scientific destruction—sheer massacre at the hands of the chemist. There are object-lessons enough to their hand to help them to realisation. . . . And, having realised, they will know two things which it greatly imports them to know. That the day of non-combatant immunity in war has passed; and that, so far, no limit has been set to the destructive inventiveness of man. That knowledge may stimulate the protective instinct—if it be a reality in woman.

We, so far, have not been caught systematically in the crowd-life; we can still, as it were, survey it from the point of view of the outsider—and understand something of the pathos of its feverish appeals for "Union," "Solidarity," "Brotherhood" . . . which, in the end, are apt to mean one and the same thing—assault upon those who disagree with us. No union stands, no solid phalanx, no band of brothers—which has not found an antagonist. Union of men since the world began has been possible only in the face of, in the fear of, antagonism; hence the need of nations, of "movements," of causes to make unto themselves antagonists, the eternal need of political parties to hate. That they might know the joy of fellowship and the uplifting agony of sacrifice, men, in all ages, have hurled themselves upon men.

Is it possible that women, by entering it, can influence and leaven the crowd-life? Not if they enter it blindly, without knowledge of its meaning and tendencies; but it may be yes, if they bring to it an understanding that the real threat to the existence of the world is the striving for union through antagonism. It may be yes, if it is clear to them—because fear of the future has opened their eyes—that in the present stage of industrial and scientific development the process of achieving unity through common hatred is a process that must end not only in the break-up of our social system, but in the reduction of human beings, now civilised, to starvation and utter barbarism. . . . Otherwise we, too, shall be swept into the vortex of common hatred and collective egoism, to seek restlessly for the ideal that promises unity—the terrible ideal, the battle-cry that justifies bloodshed.

That we can be so swept into the vortex is obvious; the

militant suffrage campaign in England is evidence of the swiftness with which women, like men, can adapt themselves to the moral standard of the collective being, can cast their offerings of personal self-sacrifice upon the altar of a god that knows not altruism. It may be that we are no more capable than our brothers of withstanding the influence of the life collective, egoistic; that it is only our indifference to the public interest that has hitherto preserved us from that influence. If so, the protective influence of women will not count for much in politics. We shall continue to denounce war—unimaginatively; making much ado about standing armies and encouraging the combative spirit in those who dislike them. Treating the symptoms and ignoring the disease. Congratulating ourselves on a decrease in the number of guns and uniforms, and troubling not at all about the persistent quantity of the combative spirit in man. Manufacturing, encouraging the combative spirit, which, sufficiently fostered, will seek an outlet—whether clad in uniform or not.

At present the only contribution we bring to the peace of the world is the habit of not fighting. That, in itself, is valuable; but in itself it is not enough—it may be, as I have said above, that we are not combative merely because we have not been subjected to the combative influence of the crowd-life. If so—if our virtue is merely negative—it will succumb to the influence of the crowd-life, to its persistent need for antagonism. And to us, as to our brothers, the call of the ideal will come to mean a battle-cry—and fellowship be bound up with hatred.

What is needed, if our world is to live, is a virtue that is positive, not negative; a virtue stimulated to foresight by the promptings of intelligent fear. All that is permanent has its root not in idealism but in human necessity and a wise apprehension thereof; thus the protective instinct in woman, if it is to be effectual, must be stimulated by dread of the combative, collective spirit, and an understanding of its workings. With Europe in ruins and a world-war but two years away, it seems little to ask of those who bear children that they should fear intelligently for themselves and those who come after them.

Yet are there many signs that they fear intelligently? Are there even many signs that they fear?

# The Plight of the Mother: 1921

By Maud Churton Braby

New Year, 1921! Two years ago, when the bells rang out so thrillingly on Armistice Day, I'll warrant most of us would have thought that by 1921 all our troubles would be over. Not the good old times come back exactly, but the far-better-new ones in full swing. That world "fit for heroes to live in," of which we don't hear much now, would be well in working order, we supposed. And by 1921, too, we should also have thoroughly "searched their pockets"—(not those of the heroes!)—with excellent effect on our own exchequer. All would be "happy and glorious," the land flowing with butter and whisky, and life one long blissful jazz.

And now, heigho! we find ourselves longing for the good old bad times, wondering why we grumbled at war conditions, and didn't know when we were well off.

There appear to be rich people still, besides the profiteers—and gay people. Silk stockings are 25s. a pair, and plenty of women are buying them. Merrymaking and dancing go on as usual—the latter more than ever. No one says "Lest we forget"—but, judging by their actions, the idea is rather "Lest we remember."

But for the woman with a family these are desperate times; and this New Year finds a growing feeling of revolt among that most uncomplaining and patient body, the middle-class mother.

(I might add here that, as the former class denominations have largely lost their meaning, the term "middle-class" in this article connotes the cultured professional and business people, who now might better be described as the "struggling class.")

Some of us have no coal to speak of, and it looks as if coal would soon be as rare as comets. Many have no

homes; there are none to rent. Others have had to buy theirs rather than be turned out, at a price double its real value and with a lease that recalls the feudal system. Very few of us have servants, and, generally speaking, the latter will not go where there are children. The wages demanded even by the unskilled grow ever more fantastic.

When I was a joyous youngster I was constantly rebuked for saying at the nursery tea-table "Pass me the usual!" In those care-free days, "the usual" meant the bread and jam. Now, when one speaks of being desperate about "the usual," our fellow-damned know we mean house-keeping and servants!

The house-wife's life to-day is obsessed by three great bugbears: the Sink, the Range and the Meter. I once wrote in a romantic novel, when I had time for such dallying: "*The saddest thing in the world for a woman over thirty is to wake up in the morning and realise that there is no man alive to whom she matters as a woman.*" But I know now that a cook is more important than a lover, and that the saddest thing in life is to wake up to a world where there is no one to stand between you and the Sink-and-the-Range, let alone protect you from your children! Four times a day, therefore, you are compelled to sacrifice to the monstrous god of the Sink, and cope in turns with the horrid Moloch of the Range. People *will* eat, you see, and so often, too! Nothing will stop them, not even having to "wash-up" afterwards. The Meter, fortunately, requires no daily human sacrifice, only a quarterly outpouring of treasure, though, of course, one has to check it every few days, if only to frighten the family into being careful.

Recently I heard a significant little dialogue at a London registry-office. "I haven't told you yet about the wages," said the down-trodden matron, as the queenly lady in command signified that the audience was at an end, having pocketed the booking fee by which she and her kind live, their stock being nil!

"It isn't *what you'll pay*," was the reply; "if I get anyone, I'll tell you *what she asks*."

"And have you really nothing on your books at all?" interposed the client, evidently feeling she had had strangely little for her half-crown. "What about all those entries on this page?"

"Oh, all those say 'No children.' I'm sorry, but they all prefer to go where there's just a couple or one lady or gentleman."

It is only too true. To-day the matron deluges the Press with advertisements (at 11s. 6d. each), without getting a single reply. She may even descend to what I consider the last degradation of the once-ruling class, *i.e.*, sitting in wait at the registry office, morning after morning, generally with no result. But the spinster whose one advertisement includes the magic words "1 lady" finds herself overwhelmed with applicants eager for her situation.

"Why don't you write again if you're so hard up?" I heard a woman novelist asked the other day. "It's a pity to waste your creative gift."

The answer came in studiously calm tones, though there was a decided glint in the lady's eye. "Well, I write the grocery list with great care twice a week, and the laundry list once. And I write to the children at school, and hundreds of letters to prospective servants whose addresses I get from country registries, telling them how nice my house, husband and self are, and suppressing our guilty secret, the family. And by the time I've done that and most of the house-work, and planned economical meals, and bought the food, and gone daily to the registry-office, and looked after baby and done the mending and the accounts—I spend a lot of time on accounts now—and tidied up for my husband, and talked brightly to him at supper—well, strange to say, by then my creative gift, as you kindly term it, isn't exactly shrieking for expression. The divine fire doesn't flame up so violently within me as you seem to think it should. I feel more like a different kind of shrieking and flaming, whilst to get to bed early has become the most important thing in the world."

That same afternoon I called on another literary woman, unmarried, in the same neighbourhood. I found her in a comfy little flat, waited on hand and foot by an excellent maid. Her bath was filled for her, her clothes laid out, her shoes put on, and if she had desired it, doubtless her food would have been put into her mouth!

"Yes, I suppose I'm lucky," she said. "I advertised, and chose this woman out of 54 replies. I gave her a list of foods I like, and those I won't have; I hand her out a

fixed sum every week, and it's understood she must see to everything and *never* come and ask me questions."

This fortunate spinster need not even answer questions in her own interests! Needless to say, she is getting through a good deal of work, and her income swelling proportionately.

Things have got to such a pitch that a mother of the struggling classes now asks nothing for herself, only to be allowed to give her children what they need. I recall a phrase from one of Mr. Galsworthy's plays, where an unemployed working man sums up his grievances in the words, "*A man only asks to be allowed to sweat his soul out and aren't let.*" (I quote from memory.)

That aptly describes the struggling mother of to-day, whose need I am now trying to voice. She is prepared to "sweat her soul out" (Thank you, Mr. Galsworthy!) in the interests of her children. Social life for her is practically impossible. She lacks the necessary leisure, the detached mind, and perhaps even suitably smart clothes. She might also feel with reason that she lacks the conversation. One soon loses the knack of those airy nothings. It wouldn't do to talk of the Sink and the Range and the Registry at a *thé dansant* or dinner party, would it? Even the theatre at present prices is beyond her purse. Pleasure in London and the getting to and from its source, is very expensive to-day. So she writes off pleasure, dress, even games, retaining possibly the library subscription as her only relaxation. All she asks—(and this would be in capital letters if printers were women)—is *to be allowed to go on doing her job until she either dies fighting or is compulsorily retired to the lunatic asylum.* Her greatest fear, her nightmare, is that her income should sink below the level of her children's needs.

It should be carefully noted that, in the main, I am writing of the "better off" and still ambitious classes, those who have not yet given up the struggle, who still strive to send their children to the best schools and give them such amenities as a seaside holiday, etc. Of the plight of those sunk below this line, I prefer not to think. But perhaps they are broken in to it and no longer care. After all, the drowning don't feel the rain!

Perhaps to these an income of, say, £1,200 a year

(£1,000 earned and £200 interest on investments) may seem lordly, but if anything like a first-class education is aimed at, it is wholly insufficient for a couple with, let us suppose, four children of school age. To specify briefly, a boy at one of the less well-known public schools costs about £120 a year, exclusive of holidays. Of course, at the best-known, double this sum would hardly suffice, but our £1,200-a-year father naturally does not aim at Harrow, Winchester, or Charterhouse. At a good-class girls' boarding-school the cost would be more like £150, though this probably understates the case. Two younger children at a London day-school of the best standard would run to £70 each, with the five mid-day meals a week. That is £410 for school bills alone. The mother will be both clever and hard-worked —also in her children's eyes probably extremely mean— if she can manage clothes for the four under £150. This brings the total for the children's education and clothes alone to £560; whilst the insurance costs, and the tax on such an income, allowing fully for the rebate granted for a wife and four children, reduces the available funds to £1,009. Considering present rates, rents, food-prices and fares, the balance of £459 does not go far for all the remaining items for a family of six. Yet a struggling professional man (with family) earning an income of twice this amount, has to pay super-tax on anything over £2,000. The rich bachelor or spinster, without any dependents, is taxed at the same rate, saving only for the paltry rebate allowed for the family. If this isn't an outrage, show me one!

To return to the question of education expenses, I should like to make it quite plain that no one can blame the schools. High prices press equally on them; their housekeeping troubles are the same as ours. The salaries of a first-class staff run into a large sum of money, and the standard of the school must be maintained. Their profits can be by no means unduly high. The head-mistress of a day school, where only the mid-day meal needs to be provided for the pupils, recently told me she had to pay out £2,000 *per term;* from which one can imagine how huge are the expenses of a boarding-school.

But the school authorities certainly could do more to help us, if only by lowering their standard of dress. The

spirit of economy does not seem to be inculcated in good modern schools; the children are not taught to keep accounts; they waste their pocket-money and possessions, and their ideas on expenditure generally are distinctly pre-war. Far too many clothes are required and these also on a pre-war basis.

The mother who has to refuse invitations because her one remaining evening-gown is too *démodé*, does not see why her twelve-year-old daughter should need three. She wears a home-made woollen jumper to save the expense of washing white blouses, whilst her small girl has to be supplied with *three* silk ones for best and *five* for everyday—(cost of the set at a school outfitter's—£10 8s. 6d.—for *one* item for *one* child, mark!).

The father, who wears soft collars that they may be washed at home, has had his pre-war suits turned, and perhaps even dyed his British warm, not unnaturally considers absurd the claim of three "black coats and vests" at £5 5s. each, for his 14-year-old son at a public school. Three all at once, plus three pairs of trousers at £2 2s. each —*£22 for one item for one child!* And the coats, at any rate, will probably be too small long before worn out.

Why cannot the boys wear soft collars, lessening laundry bills, and discard the costly and extravagant black cloth for dark grey flannel suits, with flannel shirts and an additional woollen sweater in severe weather? Surely this is a more reasonable attire for schoolboys, expense apart? Why cannot the girls learn a useful lesson in economy, and be limited to one afternoon dress for every day, and one white evening dress for festive occasions, strictly standardised as to material and style, so as to save expense and eliminate competition? A few such reforms by sympathetic Heads would do much to knock off unnecessary extras from the parents' heavy burden.

After all, these are stern times, and sterner still are without doubt coming. Our children should be trained to meet them. Their own turn for the struggle will come all too soon. The school children of to-day are the parents of to-morrow, and no mother would wish her girls to suffer as she has in the last few years, *nor to be so ill-equipped for trial.*

I shall perhaps be told that all this is vague and

pointless grumbling, and asked "Of what do you specifically complain?" And in the name of my fellow-sufferers I reply:—

(1) That the lack of servants and the soaring prices combine to produce a condition of anxiety, over-work and despair, a burden beneath which no woman can go on for long. Another consequence being that the home is no longer the joyful and happy place it should be to provide the proper environment for young children's best development.

(2) That the total result is a life altogether too grey and joyless for any gently-reared woman, who is still young and attractive enough to resent such an existence, and to rebel against it.

Also, I would like to state, very emphatically, that we do not in the least blame the husband and father for this condition. On the contrary, we have the utmost sympathy for our unfortunate mates. And those of us with a glimmer of imagination think every day how much better off he would be had he remained unmarried. This, naturally, only adds to our despair.

Nearly all married men of the struggling class are heroes nowadays; their income is spent entirely at home, of necessity, and they reserve but a pittance for their own needs. They have, however, this advantage over the wives, that they can, and certainly do, escape occasionally—"get out of it all." It is a very bad day for the wife when the expense of husband's club and hobby has to be written off as one of the forbidden luxuries.

As she reviews the past year, considers the extra burdens of the holidays, the heavy cost of even the simplest of Christmas festivities, and pleasures for the children; as she looks ahead at the stormy prospect of 1921, the mother's stout heart might well fail her.

She knows that, in spite of all her efforts and heart-burnings, the family is living up to the limit of their income, that there is no margin for emergency or further economy, let alone for the increasing needs of the growing children. What kind of prospects are there in store for her sons? Her dream of the university, of the enlightening year abroad seems very remote, if not hopelessly impossible. What

kind of lives can her girls expect? Unless specially gifted they may not be capable of earning a living in any but hard and uncongenial ways. She hardly dare wish them to marry, realising the terrific handicap on marriage to-day. Yet no woman in her heart desires her girls to remain unmated.

Let us imagine her falling asleep at last, after hours of worried wakefulness, and to her comes a soothing dream of the might-be. A world where mothers are really reverenced and treasured as, say, pugilists and race-horses are now, where the State does everything possible to encourage the family.

What a wonderful world it might be! What a poignant contrast to the present! I will leave all the sentimental and emotional possibilities to the reader's own imagination, much as the subject tempts me—and will confine myself merely to the practical side, a bald statement of what could be done in such a world if only Someone in power cared enough.

In a world where the first place was given to the family, there would be, first of all, a scheme for the endowment of motherhood, a substantial bonus covering all the extra expenses of each new baby. Many, of course, would not apply for this, and doubtless there would have to be some system of safeguarding the distribution of it, so that it was really spent on the baby and mother. This bonus would lift an immense burden from many a woman at a time when she can least afford to worry.

The family would be regarded as an asset, and not, as now, a heavy drawback. The present system of rebate of income tax for wife and children is too paltry to be of use. Let the rebate *come off the tax itself, and not off the amount to be taxed*, and let it have some relation to the actual cost of maintaining the child, so that a man with sufficient children would escape income tax altogether. I venture to predict that this would do more to popularise the family than a million speeches about the sanctity of parenthood!

The ideal to be generally aimed at would be "concessions for the family," and public opinion would be educated thereto. Concessions, such as—at random: special trains for families at holiday times; special porters only available for parties with children; and special fares—children under

six to travel free, and after that half price until sixteen. Special omnibuses to take a family to the terminus, so that the present *Hell* (yes, please, that is the correct word, in the absence of a stronger) preceding a holiday journey with kiddies would be avoided. No excess luggage charge for the family; no charges for the baby's bed, pram and bath, at present heavily penalised. (As if the Gehenna of getting those infernally-shaped objects packed, and to the station and away from the other station and unpacked, isn't enough to break any mother's heart, without the added outrage of payment!)

Above all, in the dream-world, severe penalties for any who refused to let their houses, when on the market, to families with children! And (I *am* enjoying writing this!) the creation of a special corps of trained servants, at the expense of the municipality, pledged only to take service where there are children! *(What do you think of that, poor mother a-dreaming? You are smiling for joy in your sleep already!)* Really superior servants, mark you, sympathetic, with nice manners and voices, yet not afraid of work, good sorts all, guaranteed never to leave you in the lurch at Christmas or when the new baby is nearly due. Heavily punished by law if they did—yes? (Ah me, the sweetness of this dream!)

And while we are about it, why not, when new towns are planned, the best sites reserved for the family people, instead of as now for the elderly rich, the young couples being crowded into back streets? Why not groups of suitably-sized houses and blocks of flats on the best sites, built round large central gardens, where there would be swings and sandheaps and facilities for mud-pie making; an asbestos-covered playground for wet weather, a simple gymnasium apparatus, tennis courts, and a cricket pitch; a crêche, with trained nurses in attendance, where small people could be left when their mother wanted to have a little pleasure.

"And a pretty penny it will cost! Who's going to pay for all this?" my cynical bachelor friend will instantly ask me. "Well," I reply with gusto, "you are, for one! You and all the other childless, both married and unmarried—a small tax all round, or, if necessary, a heavy tax, as heavy as the expenditure requires . . ."

It isn't nearly as impossible as it seems. Sooner or later the falling birth-rate of the Western nations will compel them all to some such policy. And public opinion is not difficult to educate, especially to a noble ideal. People would soon be as anxious for parentage as now to avoid it. There is much more to be said about this dream-world of mine—but space forbids.

The mother is waking up now, but a different expression is on her face—she has enjoyed her dream. To her I would say on New Year's morning: Take courage, brave heart—carry on! You have been so fine, so splendid—don't spoil it now. Look for comfort at your children, so exquisitely beautiful are their sleeping faces. Would you have forgone the chance of sharing in the creation of all that beauty, all that love, all those wonderful potentialities for joy? A thousand times no! The unmarried women you appear to envy may have easier lives, but yours is the real treasure of the heart, the things that matter. And all your pain, all your efforts, your struggles, your weariness—all are known, all are counted; all will be repaid in full measure, pressed down and running over . . .

Believe only that those who can help you *will* be sent to you. Will it; pray for it; send out your whole soul in that appeal.

Courage! Let us mothers try to combine for more unity, more charity—to learn to "hang together," as the men do. What marvels might we not then achieve! Remember the deathless words of Captain Scott of splendid memory: "*Slog on! Slog on!*" What better motto could we take for the fresh year of struggle just ahead? Slog on, mothers, slog on! and, once again, Courage!

# The First Woman Critic

If no woman ever wrote a play in the art creative sense—and no woman yet has—it is the more curious to find a book written by a woman, for still less are women critics, dealing with the "Modern Drama in Europe," East, West, North and South.

I anticipated—just cleverness; felicitous abuse of Strindberg, captious carping at Ibsen, a whack at G.B.S. and a back-hander at the Russians, then "Rule Britannia." Few Englishmen know enough languages even to have glanced at some of these authors' works in the originals; and Strindberg, physically unintelligible to a nation whose passion is ruled by meteorological depression, has never been translated, and can only be read in German outside his own tongue. The summary of drama ranging over fifty years in seven tongues presupposes, therefore, an amount of erudition and travel, a range and a grasp formidable enough to terrify even a politician. I believe Strindberg's *Miss Julia* has only once been played in England—at London's first cabaret, started in Heddon Street before the war by Strindberg's second wife, and I remember asking Tree why he did not play it, and his crushing rejoinder: "Will you pay the loss?" which naturally found me with empty pockets.

Starting at the end, at the summary (to see whether I could venture upon the rest), I was delighted to find a fine intellect. This was the creative life-criticism of Matthew Arnold; then, in my astonishment, I began at the beginning, to find that she dated—and founded—the new drama with Nietzsche. I stand now bald-headed before my lady-critic; Storm Jameson. I write these next words with a feeling of historical responsibility. This estimate of the Modern Drama seems to me the most compact intellectual review of the Realistic movement in Europe that I have seen, and the fact that it is by a woman is of an evolutionary cultural significance. England has again an art-critic, and that phenomenon is a woman. And as, to quote Oscar Wilde, "intellect is the only refining influence," we have here in undeniable shape the woman creator.

To most Englishmen, Strindberg is a "madman" who

needed Eno's Fruit Salts, but our lady guide knows better. She is robustiously free from sex astigmatism or type; indeed, there is no bias of sex in her judgments, unless it be found in a (perhaps feminine) weakness for Oscar Wilde and the author of *Peter Pan*, whereby she seems to betray the motherly instinct. But that may be far-fetched. Otherwise, she is hard as crystal. Not only does she understand Nietzsche, she declines to misunderstand Bernard Shaw. If she puts her foot on Pinero, Jones, Masefield, and Sudermann, she can appreciate the beauty of Hofmannsthal, Benevente, and D'Annunzio, yet differentiate them sharply, as she can chip off the photogravure of Brieux, the braveries of Rostand, the graces of Schnitzler, the poetry of Synge, and the bad eggs of the compromisers whose real objective is the box-office and whose gifts to the drama are nil. She tells us the hard art truth. A squeamishness for Sir J. M. Barrie—I must insist upon this, for the test is intellect, and few men could sit down and *read Peter Pan* or *Mary Rose*—a tenderness for Oscar Wilde—these are the two critical weaknesses in a book which must be accounted a brilliantly sane estimate of the life forces which created the Modern Realist Drama wallowing in the commercial anarchy and art degradation of the present day. The author is epicenely stern. Her judgments are derived from right concepts. Her adjectives are few, and she is never deflected. She has the virility to see that Strindberg and Ibsen were the two dominant intellects of the age, and, on the whole, her instinct is sound. If Ibsen was hailed as the pioneer feminist, Strindberg was crucified as the enemy of woman, and no artist has ever been so reviled. Here they have their due place as pathfinders. Great artists, they were prophets. Their storm and stress dealt specifically with women, at the time still manacled and proclaimed, and what they did between them was to clear the ground, to open the windows, to smash the chains, to ordain the coming of the free woman, through the truth of creative exposure.

It is very remarkable that the two great social creators of the last fifty years were Scandinavians, from whom the woman's movement came. The South has never so reacted, for still in France, with the notable exception of Antoine and his work, woman is *la femme*, even with Anatole France,

and the French stage a box-of-tricks of technique and gesture. It was in Russia that Realism "drew blood," because there it was the mirror of reality, and its art pulsation was the liberating instrument. Yet Russia produced no great dramatists. Gorki wrote one magnificent stage tragedy, which, in truth, presaged the revolution. It went across Europe, astonishing yet not teaching, to culminate in the Sadic imbecilities of the monk, Rasputin. But æsthetically Russia has not added to the world's drama, for her Realism was politics, it was the life that was to bring death to the old order. Here we see once more the great creative force of art which truly alone is the life force. Dimly, prophetically, Nietzsche, Strindberg, Ibsen, Hauptmann and the Russians foresaw and heralded Armageddon, which doubtless history will describe as the war of the "great lies." We crashed, like the *Masterbuilder* of Ibsen and the old man in Strindberg's *Damascus* who seeks the purgatory of truth. Out of it there will slowly emerge the era of woman. Realism will go—it is no longer a function. The play of Idea will go—it has no longer a message. We shall attain to the drama of symbolism, again Strindberg's gift. Art will emerge, like a new white star in the firmament, lifting men out of the mire and the mirage. We shall win to the higher state through art, or fall back into the darkness.

This is the author's case, and that is possibly why, in her denunciatory enthusiasm, she is rather hard on Bernard Shaw, who, she admits, is the outstanding genius of the British stage. She seems to wonder at this Irish ascendancy of the intellect, yet the reason is clear. It is because the Irish have the art sense of impersonal emotion that they dominate our modern stage. Thus Synge, Wilde, and Shaw, because of their fierce objectivity, their truth born of tears and subjection, tears out of which all creation emanates. The Irish are indeed the pallbearers of modern English literature, nay, even of journalism. The work of Bernard Shaw may be regarded as the poleaxe: it was necessary. Unlike Strindberg, and wholly lacking in the Swede's sense of beauty and symbolism, Shaw was at once court fool and hangman; he turned laughter into a pulpit, and so annihilated an epoch. True, he may be an imitator, "a poor one yet mine own"; yet, as he towers above all English

dramatists of his time, so assuredly he will live as one of the star-finders of British civilisation, in whose eddies and back-washes he stemmed the great current of reaction and inanity. As the author sees, there is no one else but the Fairy-Knight of our arrested adolescence, whose plays are so sweet no man can read them. It was Shaw, after Wilde, who nailed to the mast woman's tyranny of weakness, who foretold the decadence of marriage, who gave to Ibsen's Norah a staff and a grammar. For this posterity will claim him.

A work of this nature cannot be complete, and the author misses the genius of Spain, which is to be found in the *zarzuela*, or musical skit, where alone the Spain of the people finds national interpretation, but she is unquestionably right in insisting upon the North as the real culture ground of modern drama. She ought to have dwelt on the frenzied opposition from women that the creators of this drama provoked, for women, as the slave-sex, are temperamentally and educationally the upholders of formalism or convention, and so hitherto it has always been from women that artists have encountered the fiercest and most intolerant opposition. That is why the Latin peoples have moved so little from the stereotype forms of the "cape and dagger" theatre of Spain. With them, sex is the life theme. In the North, intellect has escaped from sex, and here sex has always been taboo, thus leaving a vacuum now sunk to the sole level of entertainment. And so in America the theatre is passing into screen-land, which really means that the thinking is done for the audience by the machine, in other words, that drama is dead.

She recognises this. "Rosmer, Rebecca West, Solness, all slaves," she writes, and it is true. These people are still variations of Anthony and Cleopatra—women tied to man, man tied to sex, like all French characters, from Molière to the Grand Guignol, and were it not for the superb creative strength of French actors the French play would be recognised as a very old-fashioned thing, as meaningless to the art-form of the theatre as Shakespeare's women are meaningless in our modern life. The truth is that the playhouse stands before a tremendous crisis, and if it cannot be restored into its right position as a tabernacle, the drama can have no future, and men will have lost perhaps their main cultural inspiration. For the theatre is the exchange

rate of a nation's soul. In it we see what we are, what we hope to be, and that is of course why Puritanism, which was a tyranny, crushed it, why here commercialism is crushing it. The theatre fails because of its police formalism which refuses innovation. Ghosts are still the mainstay of the stage, and after ghosts, sex, whether of "true love" or of adultery. And a long way behind comes murder. Its elliptic subtlety is its fascination. You can enthral an audience with a picture of massacre or rape, on the stage the thing is tiresome. The word only is supreme. And so the formalists control, for few men have the winged word of the stage, and when they do produce the magic, we are seized with fright and indignation, until fashion lends its sanction. Our stage to-day is a mere post-prandial entertainment.

And now? Well, will it not depend, as hitherto, upon woman? The great dramatists of Realism have freed her. Like gold, the policeman of credit, woman seeks a new currency. What will it be? The "happy horse" of Anthony? The ambrosial powder-puff of Mary Pickford? Or man's release?

For sure, we have reached a climacteric. We have had the world's Realism, proved and found it out in the great war. It may be that the author of this cruel intellectual revaluation is right, and that in symbolism we shall find exhilaration, or the "up-lift" of "Billy Sunday." As she says, "the verse of Mr. Masefield stands now where the drama of the naturalist stood more than thirty years ago." That is true criticism. It is the stuff of dreams that matters, and in this, literature or fiction is as behind the drama as are the poets. The call is thus to the artists. The need is of an intellectual pessimism, that which recreates, as poor Shelley put it, out of its own wreckage.

But is she right? That is the question. We may have got beyond the imprisonment stage of environment, the law of ecclesiastical and Swedenborgian bondage. We may—we probably—have got beyond the ultimate reconciliation or fatalism of Greek paganism, which no doubt gave to the Greeks a serenity of acquiescence unobtainable in these days of mechanics, but what then? Eliminate sex and what is to be Art's new god? Has art the will-power of a new vitality?

As we lick our wounds and sally out to the movies, we may well doubt, for to-day the stage is decay, inanition. The "higher aim" is hardly discernible in our gay profiteers' stalls. We catch no acceleration of new birth, our difficulty is to catch the 'bus home. Clearly, then, the brave pessimism of this lady, pointing to the stage as the recreator of the new life, strikes a virile and commanding note. She calls for new dramatists and a new art impulse. She bids us shoulder the cross of faith, and, rejecting formalism, to seek in symbolism what we can no longer see or feel in the counterfeit of a mock stage illusion. It will need some courage in these days of standardisation. We face life to-day in regimentals and, like a blight, formalism, the purest and highest type of which was to be seen in the old Russian ballet, chokes all individual thought and expression, and even our clothes are dictated by a pressgang. Some colossal iconoclast there will have to be, for at large is the octopus of mediocrity, and as we level down to the conditions of a proletarian *bourgeoisie*, art, which is aristocratic, may well subside into the mere cake-walk of hard auto-suggestion. Perhaps George Moore (another Irishman) is nearer the truth when he tells us that great art is dead, men lacking the repose essential to creation and the needful self-renunciation. Who knows?

Here, at any rate, is Rebecca West, the emancipated, no longer representing the "triumph of matter over mind," no longer the vampire earth-woman of Strindberg, the "doll" of Ibsen, or the seductive man-chaser with "bobbed" hair of Bernard Shaw, or even a uniformed suffragist on a side-car, but armed with the sex-free ivory of intellect: the first woman art judge. Her case is the will to create: "be venturesome." In her pages we sense the fledged new woman, born of the travail of the great Realists, but her enemy is no longer man, it is and will be her own sex. Truth is the "god of the free men." Will it ever be the god of women?

The art of the drama may depend upon the answer to that question; it lies on the lap of her sex, and here we are with no money for education! M. Storm Jameson is either a portent or an apparition, yet in any case a beacon. Her book reminds me of the first aeroplane over London. We look up.

S. O.

# The Capital Ship Again

By Sinbad

Now that the war is over, and there is no enemy within a twenty years' cycle, unless we really contemplate the incredible criminality of "liberating" America, the usual gentlemen, headed by the irrepressible Lord Sydenham, who is not a sailor, have started their periodic "big ship" scare, on the old lines, as before the war. It is to be hoped that common-sense will return in time to prevent another reckless waste of public monies, for the price of a battleship to-day is prohibitive, and its value, estimated six years hence, in the highest degree problematical. What we do *know* is that the Germans almost won in 1917 even with the very few submarines they could keep at sea, and but for the convoy system and the American torpedo-boat, mines, and other technical contributions, they almost of a certainty would have won, while the capital ships on both sides looked on, so to speak, in their respective "nursing homes" or harbours. Which being the case, and it is, one might suppose the usual gentlemen would keep a bit quiet, seeing that through their instrumentality we almost lost the war through want of imagination, and were only saved by the sterling qualities of the sailors. The technical side of the question is not yet proven, because the enemy (1) started the war with at most twenty-eight submarines, and did not fully understand their importance till 1916; (2) did not wage war against warships, but struck as a policy at commercial ships; (3) failed to seek out our capital ships in their vulnerable quarters—Scapa Flow; (4) lacked the necessary surface torpedo craft to combat our surface anti-submarine craft; in short, generally used the new weapon experimentally, or one might say, opportunistically.

Had the enemy in 1914 possessed 100 U-boats, and two dozen very fast, strongly-armed and armoured ocean destroyers to play the *Moewe* piratically on the high seas, we would have been hit in the wind, for the "big ships" did

not and could not help, but fortunately the enemy did not have the means, and so we went comparatively unmolested in the first year. Our mines at the time were "duds"; we lacked destroyers, airships and aeroplanes; our Navy was totally unprepared for the "sub." in 1914. We had officially despised the submersible boat, and now we propose to despise it again.

The truth probably is that the Kaiser lost the Germans the war, first by refusing Tirpitz authority to embark on the submarine campaign in 1916, secondly because his Imperial Majesty did not favour the "flea" which looked so small, but confined his favours to the capital ship, where he could walk the quarter-deck with a beautiful admiral's hat. And so the Kaiser got rid of Tirpitz, who had the submarine idea, and then forbade the Fleet to fight (presumably he was thinking of the first Kiel regatta after the "victory"); thus Jutland happened, which on both sides was a surprise encounter (think of that with areoplanes for eyes!). Finally, the German surrender happened, which literally was a greater surprise to our men than it was to the Germans who, when they had recovered, sunk their ships. Our data are not sufficient. The real significance of this big ship outcry lies in its revelation that we have not learnt our lessons. As usual, the usual busy-bodies are at it. As before, the theorists and Press letter-writers are busy. Once more we are trying to go back to formalism, when the supreme lesson of the war points downwards and upwards, below surface and in the air, to individualism.

We are as a nation in the comfortable position of having no possible enemy for ten years, unless we go mad, and, as we now have the experience, we should go very slowly about construction of any sort, for no power is likely to attack us and our torpedoes do explode at last, and in the air we are at any rate pretty up to date. All the talk and worry is unscientific and stupid. If we built no big ships for three years, we should probably benefit materially. The whole fuss is so peculiar that one is constrained to suspect a political motive, it may be, as part camouflage of the Persian oil policy.

One may hazard a prophecy safely. If the next naval war is fought in 1947, the by-then 24-inch gun will have to shoot vertically or the floating platform it is on will not get

much of a target. In the future Navies will have to think top and bottom. Horizontal war is obsolescent. The new horizons are the voids, up above and down below; as it is Christmas time, let us state it thus, up where the fairies fly, down where the sea-dragon lurks.

The new "Admiral of the West" will order a cormorant Navy. Heligoland won't matter then. Probably America won't come in a second time. Depth-charges won't amount to much with a sub-surface enemy speed of twenty knots. In the air it will be "thick." The question of the surface ship will certainly turn on its submersibility. Our visibility in this respect is hazy.

Submarines are still surface craft, they submerge only to escape or to attack, their power is their potentiality of the unseen. That is why the convoy system beat them—they either had to risk the guns of the accompanying destroyers or avoid them, which latter was the course pursued by Germany, no doubt rightly, owing to the small number of U-boats available. If instead of 20 battleships, Germany had built 500 submarines, there would have been no Jutland, but our commerce would have been swept off the seas, and we would have starved, even had we possessed 200 *Queen Elizabeths*. If, again, we had lost every capital ship at Jutland, the issue would hardly have been altered, for had the German ships come out then our turn would have come, and probably with excellent results. In the future, the non-submersible capital ship will in all likelihood prove a lame duck.

Why can't we do the only sensible thing, and refer the problem to Sir Percy Scott, who was right before the war, and to whom the Navy owes its gunnery efficiency? He can at least be trusted not to waste time or money. If we committed the incredible stupidity of not using his brains in the war, let us at least use them in peace. To discard his advice now is to condemn ourselves as amateurs.

# The Premier's Choice

## By Austin Harrison

It is time for an editorial chuckle. Month by month since the signing of the Treaty, this Review, almost alone among publications, has warned the Government of the consequences of its cruel, destructive, uneconomic Treaty which would inevitably destroy Europe's purchasing power, thus gradually destroying our selling capacity, upon which we live and thrive. Sneered at, sniggered at, snicker-snee'd by Press, public and Pontifex min and maximus, we held our course and, behold! all that we said again and again has come true, for to-day even the Federation of British Industries knows that Europe is dying—*ergo*, England cannot sell; that unemployment is growing—*ergo*, something must be done; that we are all drifting into hopeless and irretrievable bankruptcy (on the gold basis), only one nation in Europe, little Denmark, being able to balance its Budget two full years after war. Ministers speak of a Northcliffe "stunt." It is no stunt, it is the first sign of conscious sanity recorded by that group of newspapers since fighting ceased, and what it means is that business is afraid, caught, as usual, "unawares," as the war caught us, so much so that we hardly know, to paraphrase General Woods, "what is hitting us."

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When the war ended, instead of thinking out a policy, Mr. Lloyd George, as if afraid of President Wilson, resorted to a victory election for the purpose of obtaining a hurrah mandate to carry on the "happy family" called the Coalition. It was an historic blunder. It was so wicked that I went down to Carnarvon to protest, as a man, seeing a railway collision imminent, might run down the line waving a red handkerchief. If only the Premier had thought then! He preferred vain-glory; he got his gunmen, went to Paris, and slew Mr. Wilson, and there made a Treaty which implied the pauperisation of all Central

Europe, and the militarisation and bankruptcy of the rest. Incidentally he broke Britain's definite pledge of honour over the Peace terms, the story of which can be read in the book written by Bernard Baruch, member of the American delegation, in which he shows how General Smuts was prevailed upon secretly to rig up an enormous reparation claim for the soldiers, on the ground that some day they would be civilians. As he describes it: "One must be either ignorant, vicious, or an impractical idealist" to hope for sanity in the atmosphere prevailing at Paris. Quite so. But in this world we sleep on the bed we lay. If therefore only ignorance, vice, or dreamland conditioned the peace of Europe, it is no matter of wonder at all if the results are now seen to be decline, stagnation, and cataclysm, and the great lie of the Peace even more disastrous than the multitudinous lies of the war.

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Ever since the armistice we have lived in this dream-void. I have heard important business men speak of the thousands of millions we should get out of Germany. All was planked on super-production, while the other or purchasing market was being killed. The public was induced to believe we had all grown miraculously richer. So wonderful has been our delusion that I believe Government officials now imagine cigars grow solely for their benefit, just as a boy I thought Christmas-trees were the hardy annuals of toy-time. And now! Now the Northcliffe Press are on the wing, the Banks have taken fright. Our relativities of credit have got a measurement, the foot-rule of bankruptcy. Banks refusing overdrafts, business refuses E.P.D. Yes, it is mutiny. "We cannot pay," screams the F.B.I., and so, like *Mary Rose*, the Coalition returns to Downing Street "as it is" instead of to Pluto's seat "as it was," when money was forged at the spending rate of £5,000,000 a day. At last, a little light. A few people have their feet on earth. And as if to emphasise the fact, the Government are barricading themselves in within the sacred precincts of the little street which ominously ends in an impasse and a flight of steps.

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Deflation is always dangerous, and particularly so in time of ebullition. Nothing can more picturesquely

stigmatise the absurdity, the paralysis, the insincerity of our political mechanism than the spectacle of Mr. Clynes, heading Labour, solemnly voting for the Coalition against the Squandermania motion to fix the next Budget at a balancing figure. The so-called "revolutionaries" support the Coalition's bid for national bankruptcy! Labour votes for the men who ruined Europe, and will slowly yet inevitably ruin England and the Empire, unless they can be forced to balance the Budget and return to a statesman-like understanding of economics. That is our supreme difficulty. A Government which has no principles, no policy, no Party, no decency (this latter disqualification being evidenced with outrageous precision over our reprisals policy in Ireland, systematically denied, like a naughty schoolboy, by the man who is responsible for them); a public serenely ignorant, because kept in ignorance deliberately by dope; Labour, the one young, robust, potential force at bay, crippled with the refractions of its own doxologies; outside a Press lopped of its editors, economically hamstrung, politically strung-up by its titular syndications; over all, the barrage of propaganda, lies, omissions and falsification, so that we don't even know what we mean by the basis of credit.

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This is no exaggeration. It is the truth. Take, as an example, Venizelos. He fell the moment the chains were withdrawn; because Greece did not want him. Now here we understood that the Greeks adored him. Venizelos was really our war man for our Constantinople, Persian, Mesopotamian, Armenian "liberation" imperialism. He follows inexorably Wilson, Clemenceau, Orlando, Pilsudski, chipping another chunk off the impossible Treaty which already lies a ridiculous torso. The public know almost nothing of the truth of things. Russia is another example. After Denikin, Wrangel. The only result so far of the newly-created Catholic Polish Empire is to force the Polish mark to 2,000 in the £, and the Jews of Poland to ask for emigration permits to America. Actually, all Europe is rapidly approaching insolvency, complete financial breakdown, social disaster, world-political chaos, as the net result of the Paris Treaty, which divided up Europe into fighting war zones as the imaginary

protection of France. People who, dead to the instincts of humanity or civilisation, think it does not matter if 6,000,000 Austrians literally starve to death for the lie of self-determination, if Germany is broken up by France into a Rhenish Confederation also to die on the model of Napoleon, if Russia collapses, and all Europe east of the Rhine sinks into a pauperised wilderness of death and hate, are making a tragic mistake, because Europe must be our buying market. Already exporters here cannot sell bills on our Colonies, which means that we cannot sell to India, Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand because our Colonial exports—tea, wool, rubber and raw materials—have no European markets. Alleviation came the other day through purchases of goods from Germany, thereby enabling Germany to buy our Colonial products and so re-start our sales to the Colonies. Trade, credit, is international, that is all. Clog the mechanism, and the whole is affected. Our high prices, the "slump," our unemployment, the terrible taxation, the crushing of the middle classes—these things are due to the Treaty of Versailles, yet Labour votes for Squandermania, or the very forces which are the cause of the high prices, the unemployment, and monopolist inflation and the world's proletarianisation.

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The only agency relatively free, because it at least knows the facts—it certainly is intellectually the more alert and discerning—remains the Press, which has the power to prevent this country from drifting into the European maelstrom threatening us. Our peril is as real now as it was any time in the war until America's entry. When Mr. Hughes of Australia, for instance, proclaims that he will not sell wool to Germany, he is throttling his own country, as surely as we are throttling England by refusing peace with Russia. Such men are the world's danger to-day. One by one the authors of the infamous work done at Paris are being cast aside; our Prime Minister alone remains. They say he is quick on his feet. He will need be very quick now. Business cannot pay its taxes, and he is caught on his Budget. He cannot Budget for less than at least £1,100,000,000, because his policy necessitates an enormous war service expenditure; he is bound by his own Treaty to play Cæsar in Europe; more, he is tied to the militarism

of France; who will not let him off; who demands her pound of flesh; who knows, what Mr. Lloyd George probably did not originally know, that no money can be extracted from Germany because by Treaty Germany is debarred from all possibility of recovery or even of life, and because of this strangle-hold France hopes to demolish her. And so nothing happens. All this the Americans told him at Paris, but he refused sense. "The evil that men do lives after them." The evil is apparent in the England of to-day. The author of it is chained to his own whipping-post.

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Release, escape, sanity, warmth, prosperity, work, even food—all these gifts are obtainable for us; at any rate, can be had for the asking, for Europe's needs are great indeed, and we can and ought to supply them. That way means bliss and wealth to us. We have but to re-start the circular motion of credit for trade to begin. We have but to restore confidence, that is, to make a real Peace, for credit to influence the purchasing power of Africanised Europe. We have but to turn the key of commonsense to get back to sound economic laws. Can we? That is the world's issue. The Coalition, which appears to regard itself as a sacred body, to criticise which is irreverent if not lèse-majesté, can obviously now not retrace its steps, or check its waste, or embark on a constructive policy, since to do so implies principles it does not hold and an attitude it has no moral or intellectual concept of. When newspapers now cry out against the senseless waste in Mesopotamia, Persia and elsewhere, including the secret subsidising of the Venizelos militarist policy in Asia Minor, while invoking the integrity of the Treaty, they strain at the gnat; the real evil lies in the book written at Versailles, and until the Treaty is radically altered or torn up, we are pledged—with the support of the very newspapers now so vociferous—to maintain a vast land Army and a vast Navy, for only so can an impoverished, desperate Europe be kept in the conditions of slavery imposed upon it by the men who betrayed President Wilson. At Paris we and the French divided up Europe into zones of influence; that is why Venizelos was so popular—he played our game, but now the Greeks don't want to pay for the upkeep of 100,000

troops in Asia, and now we too find we cannot afford our Persian and Mesopotamian jaunts and a Palestine which no Jew wants, and a "Methodist" Armenia. And this is only part of the story. We have military liabilities everywhere, and war points on every latitude.

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Consider. We have to maintain a bankrupt Poland, helplessly squeezed in between Germans and Russians, historically thus doomed to a fourth partition. We have recognised an artificial Baltic Russia, an artificial Ukrainia, an artificial (oil) Russian Republic in the Caucasus. It may be that we can hold that position so long as Lenin lasts, because Bolshevism does not think nationally. But the moment "White" Russia returns, as we desire, we shall be faced with a chronic war condition with Nationalist Russia, from Lithuania to Baku; from the ridiculous Curzon-Polish line to Vladivostock. In the centre we have established a Greater Roumania, cut out of Hungary and Russia—another Alsace-Lorraine certainty. Czecho-Slovakia is another; this "liberated" country actually governs as a minority over a heterogeneous national majority as hostile, as cumbersome, as impossible as the Austria of the Hapsburgs, and this monstrous midwifery of an empire is a non-economic unit which cannot prosper, because as war was its justification, so economic war remains its parasitic sanction. Then there is Jugo-Slavdom, another midwifery concatenation of irreconcilables, for whom also we must fight. There is our new empire of annexations or mandates (it matters not what we style them), which are bound to prove terribly costly, hopelessly unproductive, disastrously disintegrating. Finally, there is France, for whom all this strategic map-casting was done, with a declining population, arrogating to herself the military sovereignty of Europe, living on "paper," refusing to tax herself, or balance her Budget, expecting us to fulfil our Treaty obligations to fight for her and pay the bill whenever and wherever she directs.

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How can Mr. Chamberlain produce a Budget of £800,000,000 in these conditions? Our dead-weight charges form more than half that sum. We owe America £1,000,000,000, the interest on which we have been let off,

and before 1928 we are supposed to redeem nearly £2,000,000,000. To get a £900,000,000 Budget we must cut the Services by at least £200,000,000, and then? What would France say, left straddled with the hegemony of Europe on her hands, left—one writes this as comic opera—to finance her Polish, Czech, and Jugo-Slav empires? To attack Mr. Lloyd George for Mesopotamia is camouflage, for that very Press made the Mesopotamian or Carthaginian Treaty. They could have stopped our mad career in Parisian hotels—they said nothing. Had they rallied round Mr. Wilson in 1918, they would have saved the world. But they chose to be sleeping partners, coadjutors, collusionists in the astonishing conspiracy of lies which are now coming home to roost on rich and poor alike; which finds expression in the shooting up of Ireland as the highest wisdom available. The Press must do better than this. It must first be honest. It must assume national responsibility. It must compel the Government to come to its senses, just as in the war it compelled the Government to come to action. But it is no good tinkering. To cry economy on education is treason to the dead, and an offence to the living. To tweak the unfortunate Mr. Chamberlain for E.P.D. while ignoring the necessity of it, is a sham, and in consequence the good cry fails. Fails almost justly, as it were.

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Those wealthy men who control our credit-issues, our prices and our souls, what do they mean? If we remove E.P.D., how are we to raise the revenue to meet our own Treaty obligations? To pay for Mr. Churchill's Russian wars, Lord Curzon's Eastern megalomania, Mr. George's Venizelosean cartographics, nay, our bond and troth as the fighting partner of a France set up to dominate and throttle Europe by force. I am sure the objectors to E.P.D. refute the notion of a capital levy, which, of course, can only be carried out as a policy of limitation of individual wealth, to which we shall eventually probably be driven. What do they propose? Does the F.B.I. imagine the men who won the war are going to submit to the scrapping of education and all social reforms in order that Mr. Churchill should bleed the country white to play Captain Cockhorse all over Europe? Are we of the middle classes

to go down and out because France is afraid? For that is the cause of it all—fear. And greed. And gross, flatulent stupidity on the part of business men, who thought that if we smashed the purchasing power of Europe we had created a monopolist selling power of the super-State. This is madness.

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It is good that at last some of those who have much to lose are afraid, for now there is hope again. Our policy is clear as daylight. First, it is to balance a Budget round about £900,000,000. Secondly, it is to give Dominion Home Rule to Ireland, and dissolve the terrorist police. Thirdly, it is to make peace with Russia and trade, ship for ship, ton for ton, by barter, as circumstances and supplies allow. Fourthly, it is to inform all the strategic units we are financing or permitting to wage tariff wars, that henceforth we repudiate responsibility. Lastly, it is to tell France straight out that the Treaty must be revised, for otherwise Europe will collapse, and since that contingency spells disaster to us and to our Colonies, we have no alternative but to begin afresh, to build constructively, to think this time economically, or admit that the world's economic mechanism is broken beyond recovery. If we don't now do these things, we shall find slow decline, increasing unemployment, trade stagnation, prices soaring, credit growing tighter, and then, one by one, the nations of Europe reeling into social and economic chaos, involving gradually the whole.

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Yet overnight we could turn the key of salvation. One week of firm statesmanship, and every man in these islands could be employed usefully, turning out the things that dying Europe requires; our exports would exceed once more our imports; our exchange would rise in New York; across the body of Ireland, given a right and enduring peace, we could find an Anglo-Saxon equation of world-embracing interest, and through this historic foundation we could give back to Europe her credit, and in every home on the Continent bring peace and understanding. Why don't we do this? The alternative is death. We cannot muddle through. We can only build through to light and plenty; and it is there before our eyes, shrieking to the

heavens, awaiting but the magic word, which hitherto has been our glory, common-sense. With a spark of imagination, any morning the Prime Minister could give to bleeding Europe this open sesame. Who would dare oppose him? His Party is the Federation of British Industries plus—clamour. The former want E.P.D. taken off, the latter is but an attitude susceptible to any counter-irritant that is vocal. It does not count. But the Federation does. All that Mr. Lloyd George has to do is to explain to Mr. Peter Rylands that if E.P.D. is to go, Versailles must be modified, and to ask for the necessary mandate. I don't fancy the Federation or the Banks would refuse, or Labour, or Liberalism, or the women of the proletarian middle class, or even Parliament, tied, as it is, to war "dittos." Mr. Lloyd George has only to say to himself, in the words of Higginbottom: "What, firemen, afraid of bumps!"; and the thing could be done, for automatically Republican America would react, and bills could be paid again on our Colonies, and the £60,000,000 wool stock could be sold for £100,000,000, and Coats would probably make a profit of £8,000,000, and houses could be built, and the numerous gentlemen living on overdrafts might pay a bit back, and so tranquillise the nasty anxiety of Bankers. And if France objects, preferring paper militarism, well, *à la bonheur*, that is not our concern. We have to trade or sink. We are not really Balbrigands or Cork-quistadores. Let Mr. Lloyd George stand to with the hose of Higginbottom, and play on the burning fires.

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Then—— Yes, he will get his statue in Whitehall. The *Daily Mirror*, which has put up so good a fight for economy, will carry him over the ditches of Fleet Street, safely past the threatening lamp-posts, out of range of the mitrailleuses of *Morning Post* or *Daily Herald*, and as he passes this office we will promise him a garland of white roses. It is said that the Welsh have imagination. We must soon know now. If we want money out of Germany, the problem is not one of words, still less of bayonets, it concerns transfer of value, that is, to pay Germany must be able to produce and sell. There is nothing else in it. But if the Prime Minister is afraid of French politicians, fears this or that "Mary Ann," or the re-percussion of his own

"dud" promises, and trusts to "wangling," or American sentimentality, or the luck of another pantaloon election, then for sure he will have lost the Peace, for there are no American reserves to fall back upon this time, and a broken credit is its own depth-charge. Another six months of fruitless talks at pleasant watering-places, and Europe will be choking. Another year, and Europe will be in the slough and swamp, and by that time we shall have to prepare to take real money from the real men or follow suit.

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The horrible truth is that pre-war Europe could not feed itself, and lived on the circulatory mechanism of industrialism. It cannot re-start, for it has no credit to buy the "raw," and the actual acreage of food production is shrinking. At Paris they made an Austria which must starve; a Hungary which must disintegrate; a Germany which, without coal, must disgorge about 10,000,000 people or starve, and they refuse peace with Russia. They de-industrialised the great Free Trade centre; destroyed the avenues of distribution, and in place established a mosaic of tariff barriers, racial animosities, and political hatreds, which economically must lead to the pauperisation of a continent which at the best of times could only support itself by frenzied industrialism. The very men who fear and fight Lenin have actually made Marx's axiom of revolution inevitable. On the present map, Europe will either break its own Treaty—it is doing so—or sink into the darkness, precisely as Russia has done, shorn of credit, trade, and supplies; and if the process is permitted to continue, nothing can prevent Lenin's point of anarchy from becoming the law of necessity of Europe.

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I discussed this a year ago with a prominent member of the Federation of British Industries, himself worth a couple of millions. I said, "What about our markets?" He replied: "We shall ignore Europe and sell in the East." To-day, we know that is a myth. Our Colonial trade is dependent upon European purchasing power. In the East, America and Japan are our fighting trade rivals—Japan faced with her surplus population crisis, America with her now imperative necessity to export. We were all over-populated before 1914. We thrived because the workers

mostly lived in conditions of bare subsistence—they will not do so now, particularly in Russia, in Poland, in Britain, in Italy. Owing to the blind folly of the three men who wrecked Europe at Paris, industrialism is at stake; the lives of tens of millions are the issue; we stand at the beginning of the end of the capitalist order. We alone of belligerent Europe are potentially solvent, but the misery of Europe is a boomerang, as we see here in growing unemployment, monopolist prices, and a growing debt, not a penny of which we shall recover from our Allies, who, in turn, will not recover anything substantial from the enemy.

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Mr. Lloyd George may imagine that Mesopotamia matters—it matters not a straw. The only thing of any real importance to-day is Europe's credit, failing the restoration of which politicians are trying to measure velocity in space. How long will it take to crash? What is the risk to the Premier to prevent the crash? Such is his problem. We could and should be fairly comfortable here, or we shall grow very angry. That is the choice. The Budget depends upon policy. Churchill's way or Rothermere's. Financially, it is 97 to 1 on Rothermere. If we allow France to seize the Ruhr Valley and precipitate the *débâcle*, Europe will move towards disaster and revolution, which will bring this country down. It is the concern of every man and woman in these islands, for millions will have to leave Britain, and to the rest life will be shorn of incentive. Remember this. Taxes cannot drop, or rates, or prices, unless we give back to Europe her credit and opportunity. It can be done by revising the Treaty. Every voter in the kingdom should press for Chamberlain's "normal" Budget, and, if the spendthrifts refuse to react, the public can compel them to resign.

# How Russia is Fed

## By Michael S. Farbman

No other question in the affairs of Russia engages so much attention, and is so vehemently discussed as that of food, and perhaps in this matter less knowledge is shown by those discussing it than on any other Russian problem. A large body of opinion informs us that, owing to the fatal incompetence of her government, Russia is starving; while from the other side we are assured that the Soviet Government has the food situation well in hand, and that everybody in Russia is, if not well fed, then at least adequately nourished. The first body of opinion pours scorn on the Russian Government because of its inability to fulfil the promise of giving bread to the vast starving masses of its population, while their opponents are "frankly astonished" at the remarkable progress shown by the Soviet Government in its success in solving the food problem in a country disorganised by war, suffering from a tight and persistent blockade and a violent—foreign subsidised—civil war, which has been raging continuously for almost three years.

In giving an unbiassed and exact account of how the population of Russia is actually fed, one is surely serving a useful purpose. In attempting this task one is greatly assisted by the amount of statistical materials compiled in Russia which present a full and objective account of the situation in regard to the feeding of the town and country population of Russia for the last two years. Enquiries into the food situation in the first two years of the Revolution are of smaller scientific value, because, for the most part, they are based on more or less accidental observations and on local returns. The investigations of the last two years have been conducted by the Central Statistical Department on a systematic basis and over a broad area comprising thirty-three "goubernias," or provinces. Since the spring of 1919 there have been four of these investiga-

tions, three into the feeding of the town population (in March-April, 1919; June-July, 1919; and December, 1919-January, 1920), and one into the feeding of the peasants (March-April, 1920).

Before giving the results of these investigations, it is necessary to explain the two terms which are commonly used by Russians when discussing this problem. Russia is divided into two zones; the zone of surplus of agricultural produce, and the zone of deficit or lack. The first area comprises the region of the river Kama, the Middle Volga region, the Don, and the Black Soil belt of the Ukraine. This area is called in Russia the "producing" zone, and the area north of this rich country is called the "consuming" zone. The terms "producing" and "consuming" are well established in the literature of Russian economics and agriculture. Still, they are apt to mislead, because both parts of Russia are naturally both producing and consuming at the same time; but the real difference is that the southern part of Russia has usually a surplus over and above its own needs which it exports, while the other, the "consuming" area, never grows sufficient grain even for its own needs, but has to import part of the surplus of the "producing" areas. So that, to avoid any possible misunderstanding, instead of the terms "producing" and "consuming," I shall use "exporting" for "producing" and "importing" for "consuming," which have a much clearer and less mistakable meaning.

The three investigations into the feeding of the town population of Russia undertaken by the Statistical Department have been carried out by the same methods, though the areas covered are not quite identical, because the tendency of these investigations is towards their being broadened territorially until at last the whole of Russia comes under their scope. Nevertheless it is considered that the data received from these investigations are quite capable of comparison because the returns from places covered by all three investigations are manifesting a remarkable stability.

First of all, let us take the cereal foods. Comparing the figures of all three investigations we see the improve-

ment or otherwise in the bread consumption of the population and the amount actually supplied by the Bolshevik Food Administration. In the first table is recorded the amount of bread and bread-stuffs (flour and crushed grain) the population is actually in receipt of, both from Government sources and from the free or "speculative" market, and the second table gives the amount of bread and bread-stuffs received from the Government only.

BREAD SUPPLIES OF THE TOWN POPULATION OF RUSSIA FROM ALL SOURCES.
Per head per day (in Russian pounds).

| | Food Importing Areas | Food Exporting Areas | Average for the whole of Russia |
|---|---|---|---|
| March–April, 1919 ... | 0·85 | 1·21 | 0·95 |
| June–July, 1919 ... | 0·88 | 1·09 | 0·97 |
| Dec., 1919–Jan., 1920 | 1·02 | 1·33 | 1·13 |

BREAD AND BREADSTUFFS SUPPLIED TO THE TOWN POPULATION BY THE GOVERNMENT ONLY.
Per head per day (in Russian pounds).

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| March–April, 1919 ... | 0·35 | 0·67 | 0·44 |
| June–July, 1919 ... | 0·23 | 0·38 | 0·29 |
| Dec., 1919–Jan., 1920 | 0·30 | 0·60 | 0·41 |

GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES IN COMPARISON TO THE WHOLE OF THE BREAD SUPPLIES IN PERCENTAGE FORM.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| March–April, 1919 ... | 41·1 | 55·0 | 45·8 |
| June–July, 1919 ... | 26·1 | 34·7 | 30·1 |
| Dec., 1919–Jan., 1920 | 30·5 | 45·8 | 36·7 |

These tables show, first of all, that the Government supplies of bread fell to the lowest level in the summer of 1919, and though they did improve a little in the winter months, they did not even reach the moderate Government ration of the spring of the same year. As we see from the third table, the Government supplied in the spring of 1919 nearly one-half of all the bread that reached the population (46 per cent.), but in the winter of 1919-20 the Government contributed only 37 per cent., so that the people had to provide for themselves the large amount of 63 per cent. of their daily bread; or, in plain figures, the amount supplied by the Government per head per week fell from two and one-half pounds (in the bread-importing zone) in the spring of 1919, to two and one-eighth in the winter, while in the food-exporting zone it fell from four and five-

eighths pounds per head per week to four and one-half pounds in the winter. Or if we take the average figures for all Russia, the weekly ration supplied by the Government fell from three and one-eighth pounds in the spring to two and seven-eighths pounds in the winter.

Such was the very unsatisfactory state of the bread supplies to the towns in 1919. If we now take the other food obtained, that is, the food received in addition to bread by the town population, we see that it not only did not compensate for the decreased ration, but also brought the food consumption to a still lower level. If we compare the consumption of the Russian town population with the standards considered necessary for a human being both at rest and at work by the physiologists, we see clearly enough the dangerous position to which the town population has been reduced. According to Gautier (*Alimentations et le régime chez l'homme*), the minimum number of calories necessary to a fully grown worker are :

| | |
|---|---|
| During rest ... ... ... ... ... | 2,300 calories |
| While performing light work ... ... | 2,450–2,860 calories |
| While performing hard work ... ... | 3,300–3,800 calories |
| While performing very hard work ... | 4,000–5,000 calories |

Yet the consumption of the town population in Russia, expressed in calories for a grown-up worker, is actually only :

| | Food-Importing Areas | Food-Exporting Areas | Average for all of Russia |
|---|---|---|---|
| March–April, 1919 ... ... | 2,245 | 2,883 | 2,558 |
| Dec., 1919–Jan., 1920 ... | 2,580 | 2,996 | 2,761 |

Thus in the spring of 1919, the consumption of the mass of the Russian town dwellers was on the minimum subsistence level (under 2,500 calories), and only the population of the food-exporting zone obtained enough food to permit light work (over 2,500 calories). Even if we take the average figures for all Russia (in the spring 2,558 and in the winter 2,761 calories), we see that the food consumption would only allow light work. Therefore the work performed in Russia was actually carried out at the expense of the worker's own energy, by the waste of the proteid of the human body—a process which is sometimes called "proteid hunger." In the winter of 1919-20 the food supplies, as we have seen, improved in the "food-

importing" zone (from 2,245 to 2,580 calories, or by 15 per cent.). That this improvement in the food supplies affected chiefly the poorer provinces indicates that the Government were able to obtain great food supplies from the South, as the result of the defeat of Denikin. Still, the average consumption of the town population in the winter of 1919-20 remained very low, being on the level which permits of light work only.

Of course, the food consumption varies, not only according to the two big zones—the area of surplus and the area of deficit—but in each of these areas we find unequal distribution, some towns being better situated than others. Thus among 59 towns in the food-importing zone, 53 had an average consumption on the minimum-subsistence level, while the supplies of five others were large enough to permit "light" and moderately "hard" work, and one town had even sufficient food to allow the performing of "hard" work. The same state of affairs we find in the food-exporting zone, where nine towns had food supplies only just large enough to keep the population alive, while 29 towns obtained food enough to perform moderately "hard" work, and eight towns even had supplies large enough for "hard" work. However, in only two towns, which are situated in the richest corn-producing territories (Samara and Pensa), the average food consumption reached nearly 4,000 calories—a level which according to Gautier permits even "very hard work." Moscow, Petrograd, Smolensk, Vladimir, and Vologda have an average consumption of between 2,500 and 3,150 calories, which allows only "light work."

There has been much irresponsible talk about the food consumption of the workers of Russia under the new régime, some asserting that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" means the wholesale robbery of the rest of the population for the benefit of the workers, who are said to be splendidly provided for in a world of want and misery; others, on the contrary, vehemently protesting that the workers in Russia to-day are comparatively worse off than they were under the old régime.

There is now at our disposal objective data which show that the workers receive special attention and much care. Though, on the whole, they receive a slightly larger ration

per head than the rest of the population, the quality and calorific value of their food are less than the average of the rest of the population. According to the reports of the last investigations (December, 1919-January, 1920), the food consumption of the workers, compared with that of the rest of the population, is only three to five per cent. higher, so that even the Russian workers do not receive enough food to enable them to perform "hard" work, and where hard work is performed it is done at the expense of the workers' bodily health.

The following table will make this clear:

| | Calories received by whole population | By the workers | Worker's higher Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| In the food-importing provinces ... | 2,580 | 2,657 | 3 |
| In the food-exporting provinces ... | 2,996 | 3,146 | 4·8 |
| Average for all of Russia ... ... | 2,761 | 2,870 | 4 |

To obtain an adequate idea of how terribly deficient the present food supply of the workers is, it is necessary to compare their consumption with the average amount of food consumed by the Russian working classes in the days before the war. Still more striking will be the result if the present food rations of the workers are compared with the pre-war consumption of the general town population of Russia, as shown in the table presented below:

| Present food consumption of the workers | The pre-war consumption of the worst-fed Moscow workers | General pre-war town consumption |
|---|---|---|
| 2,870 calories | 3,458 calories | 3,891 calories |

which shows a decrease of 18 per cent. in the feeding of the workers of to-day, as compared with the conditions for the workers which existed before the war, and of nearly 30 per cent. as compared with the pre-war average consumption of the town population.

Small and inadequate as the quantity of the food supplies are, it is not so much the quantity which is at fault, but rather the composition and the quality of the food they receive which makes the Russian food situation so dangerous. A comparison with the normal standards will

illustrate the situation, and therefore we must refer back to Gautier.

| | Proteids grammes | Fats grammes | Carbonates grammes |
|---|---|---|---|
| During rest ... ... ... | 107 | 65 | 407 |
| During hard work ... ... | 156 | 85 | 709 |

This second table shows the composition of the food actually obtained by the Russian population :—

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Average for all town population of Russia ... ... ... | 71 | 42 | 451 |
| Workers ... ... ... | 68 | 38 | 471 |

Thus we see a lack of proteids and of fats in the food of the Russian people of from 30 per cent. to 40 per cent., even if we compare the Russian figures, not with Gautier's standards for a man who is working, but for one who is resting. A comparison with Gautier's standards for workmen performing hard work demonstrates a deficiency of as much as 57 per cent. of proteids, and of 55 per cent. of fats. Only in carbonates (if we compare the figures of Russian workers with Gautier's standards for a resting man) is the consumption of the Russian workers quite sufficient, but it is made up by a considerably bigger—three to four times—consumption of potatoes.

The foregoing table of the composition of the food consumed by the population of Russia permits at least one very interesting comparison of the differences in the quality of the food as between the workers and the average consumption of the whole population; it is richer in carbonates, but considerably poorer in proteids and fats. This lack of proteids and fats in the food of the workers is, moreover, augmented by the fact that the amount of animal food has almost completely disappeared. The percentage of calories obtained from animal food was in the spring of last year as low as 13 for all the town population, and only 10 in the food of the working class. We have seen that in the winter of last year the total food supplies became larger in quantity, but still lower in quality. It has become more monotonous and coarse. The consumption of meat and fish is now not more than one-third of its quota in the consumption of the worst-fed Russian workers before the war.

The present food of the Russian town population

consists of 64 per cent. of bread and breadstuffs, 20 per cent. of potatoes, 7 per cent. of other vegetable food, and only 9 per cent. of animal food. In fact, the quality of the food in Russia has now become so very bad, and what there is of it is so monotonous and coarse, that its quality is making it more dangerous to the health of the people than the lack of it. The town population suffers not so much from empty stomachs as from stomachs filled with food of an unsustaining character. There is no famine in Russia in the ordinary sense of the word, but there is, in fact, an acute "proteid" and "fat" hunger in the Russian towns. And the disastrous effects of starvation are already at hand; terrible emaciation of the people, perilous nervous overstrain, extraordinary irritability, weariness and easy exhaustion, receptivity to illness—all these factors contributing to the turning of any disease into the character of an epidemic, and every epidemic into a perfect death-trap. The death rate in the Russian towns has tremendously increased, as, for instance, in Petrograd it is now 82 per thousand—an ominous European record. Again the unusual decline of births is due to hunger exhaustion, which, according to statements made by various doctors, affects so much the organism of the women that the menses cease, which, according to the same authorities, may not begin again even with the improvement of the conditions of life.

Turning now to the food conditions in the Russian villages, it can be stated that, on the whole, the consumption of the peasants has undergone a lesser change than that of the town population, and that the changes that took place have been rather to the benefit of the Russian peasants. Yet this last statement would be misleading, if it were not pointed out that the pre-war consumption of the Russian peasants was far from normal. The food of the peasants always lacked the necessary amount of proteids, and to even a greater extent it lacked fats, containing, on the other hand, an overwhelming amount of carbonates.

The unsatisfactory state of the consumption of the Russian peasants could be clearly seen from the table showing the food consumption of the Russian and French peasants, also of the Russian and French town population respectively.

| | Peasants. (Per head per day in grammes.) | | Town Population. (Per head per day in grammes.) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Russian. | French. | Russian. | French. |
| Bread ... ... ... | 855·6 | 330·0 | 807·5 | 460·0 |
| Potatoes ... ... ... | 366·2 | 200·0 | 333·6 | 100·0 |
| Vegetables and fruits ... | 142·1 | 380·0 | 121·4 | 320·0 |
| Meat and fish ... ... | 78·1 | 580·0 | 240·0 | 269·7 |
| Dairy produce ... ... | 365·1 | 465·0 | 287·9 | 241·0 |
| Eggs ... ... ... | 2·7 | 70·2 | 23·8 | 24·1 |

(The figures in this table are compiled by eminent authorities: Russian peasants—Klepikov, French—Joppe, Russian town population—Kabo, French—Gautier.)

We see that while the food consumption of the Russian town population was before the war (with the exception of the heavy bread and potato consumption of the Russians) nearly equal to that of the French town population, the rations of the Russian peasants could not bear comparison with the satisfactory and wholesome menu of the French peasants. The Russian peasants consumed only one-third of the amount of vegetables and fruits consumed by the French peasants, one-seventh of meat and fish, two-thirds of dairy produce, and an insignificant proportion of the very large egg consumption of the French peasants.

According to the investigation into the food consumption of the Russian peasants conducted by the Russian Central Statistical Department in March-April of last year, the average consumption of the Russian peasants is at present as follows:

Present Peasant Consumption.
(Per head per day in grammes.)

| | |
|---|---|
| Bread ... ... ... ... ... ... | 800·0 |
| Potatoes ... ... ... ... ... ... | 652·0 |
| Vegetables and fruits ... ... ... | 150·0 |
| Meat and fish ... ... ... ... ... | 53·0 |
| Dairy produce ... ... ... ... ... | 256·0 |
| Eggs ... ... ... ... ... ... | 2·4 |

This comparison with the figures in the previous table, showing the food consumed by the Russian peasants before the war, demonstrates how little their standard of life has changed. Expressed in caloric values the present food consumption of the Russian peasants is 27 per cent. higher than the average food consumption of the towns; the food

of the peasants contains also a much larger amount of proteids, while the lack of fats, so strongly felt by the population of the towns, is also characteristic of the food of the peasants.

THE FOOD OF THE PEASANTS COMPARED WITH THAT OF THE TOWN POPULATION AND THE WORKERS.

| Average calories | | Proteids grammes | Fats grammes | Carbonates grammes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Peasants ... ... | 3,512 | 97 | 48 | 651 |
| Towns generally | 2,761 | 71 | 42 | 451 |
| Workers ... ... | 2,870 | 68 | 38 | 471 |

Here again, naturally, are observed fluctuations, the maximum being the food consumption of the Samara Government (4,479 calories, 128 grammes proteids, 82 grammes fats, and 777 grammes carbonates); the minimum being that of the Moscow Government (2,845 calories, 100 grammes proteids, and 45 grammes fats). Thus the food consumption of the peasants in the food-importing zone is not much better than that of the average worker's food. However, it is richer in proteids and contains a slightly higher percentage of fats.

# Books

THE NEW KEEPSAKE FOR THE YEAR 1921. Edited by X. M. BOULESTIN. With plates selected by J. E. LABOUREUR. Published by the Chelsea Book Club. 18*s.* 6*d.*

M. BOULESTIN, cheerful as ever home from the war, has compiled a compendium of young artists, French and English, set in a beautiful volume which, as a production, is a joy. By far the biggest English name in the collection is that of D. H. Lawrence, and particularly interesting is the selection of French names. Woodcuts and etchings make this a charming gift which we recommend if only as an introduction to the editor and his æsthetic work.

# On Following One's Own Taste

By Thomas Moult

CRITICISM, writes Mr. T. S. Eliot in *The Sacred Wood*, is as inevitable as breathing. His assurance mocks into insipidity the plaint, heard more and more frequently, that the critic's influence is evaporated, that there is no use for him anyhow, and that his utterance has become a mere fungus growth on the created literature of a period. Readers are said to be readier to brush away the critic's contribution to a work of art before they begin the study of it, but here we have good word that, like the widow of Scriptural memory, the critic will remain importunate in spite of all. And, it might be added while the new burst of optimism engendered by Mr. Eliot is on us, sooner or later out of critical mediocrity, even out of its futility, will emerge the newer Coleridge, the giant possessing exactly those virtues without which a critic's effort, as he is for ever being told, is at best to be likened only to the tinkling of cymbals and sounding brass.

A hooded eagle, in very truth, this super-critic will be, but not in any sense of Shelley's phrase "among blinking owls."[2] It is difficult to imagine that any other period of literary history has held so many technically competent persons as there are at present pursuing the critic's vocation. This is not to say that criticism has its proper temper, or reached the standards and touchstones of right taste so far with any certainty. It is regrettable to find certain of our litterateurs regarding the medium as little else than a means of paying off old scores against their betters; and regrettable no less that elements other than the purely artistic should be allowed to enter into our calculations—as witness the contemptuous attitude held by most critics younger than Sir Arthur Quiller Couch towards the writings of George Meredith. But, in spite of lapses, personal and impersonal, criticism has assuredly not since Coleridge's

time been treated so seriously as a deliberate, disinterested art, with laws and methods of its own, by so many people. Nor has the critical mind been allied to such an extent with imaginative vision. It is this latter fact, indeed, that lifts the likeliest of our writers away from the philosophic flatness which has been the atmosphere of more than one preceding age.

But competent specialism amounts to very little, when all is said, if it be of the letter and with nothing exceptional of the spirit. We are continually being brought up against the truth that whatever the influence of criticism may be on the cultured mind, on that of the average book-reading Englishman it is no greater than that of the anonymous penny-a-liner in the morning picture-paper. Even charlatanism will compete with the genuine thing and emerge triumphant, if behind it be the personality which is not necessarily part of the equipment of the competent specialist. This is because the force behind art, as behind all human affairs, is personality, all-compelling, and richly endowed with the power which enabled Shakespeare to impress himself gradually through the centuries on all men's lives. If that personality be not present, there is no human being that will not chafe at and cast off, sooner or later, the domination of itself by mere competence. False notions of democracy, which, if we come to examine them, belong rather to our prevailing bureaucracy, have prompted our generation to do this casting-off too readily; and the absence of personality from critical literature has made it possible for the average reader, possibly for the first time, not only to pursue his own taste but to feel an unholy contentment with its gratification in his own particular way.

The effect of all this is that the critics may now thunder out their own conviction that Mr. This and Miss That are worthless from the æsthetic standpoint, that someone else's books are the true literature, and yet find themselves diverting not a single reader from one type of writer to the other type. The "society" novel, for example, as we have it with us to-day, is definitely an inartistic product. Those who are responsible for it do not profess it as anything otherwise. Discriminating readers are heartily sick of it in all its branches. But the public taste seeks no less eagerly for every "evening-dress" novel it can catch hold on, and,

what is more, behaves in the very face of competent criticism with a defiance which is precisely that of the cat that will kill and devour its mouse before your disapproving eye. We have got into the habit of accepting the advice of every kind of specialist grudgingly, and, in certain instances, rightly so; as a consequence there is nothing in which we incline to follow our own taste so readily as in the arts. It is only when the man with compelling personality comes along that we turn and follow his.

But shall we do so in the future? There are worthy folk who even applaud a condition of things where the general public is its own supreme critic, and who regard it as a healthy sign that on the thought and word of the same public depends the fate of any literary work whatsoever. Every man, in other words, is the best judge for himself, even in poetry, though he may not be able to distinguish a sonnet from a vilanelle. It is conveniently forgotten, so well-meaning are they, that the people of Shakespeare's day preferred his sensuous poetry to the great plays which they began to appreciate only when the force of a tremendous personality impelled them to it; or that John Clare was utterly neglected for half-a- century, and only to-day have scholar poets begun to urge his obvious claims—which will in due course be accepted by the public only if his personality is potent enough to make itself felt. And the public is, in face of these consequences of following its own taste, still on a pedestal as the ultimate judge. . . . It is probably by this that our best sellers console themselves for the neglect of the critics.

"Every man to his taste": the prevalence of such a wrong-headed maxim is partly due to the lack of that old humility of soul before our great literature. Our faith for the future, therefore, comes to rest more and more on those few individuals here and there whose personal standard is comprised of the sum total of their literary thought and experience readily interchanged with that of other literary thought, other literary experience. Humility is, for them, not servility; nor is acknowledgment of superiority necessarily anything to do with slavery. The exponents of true criticism need not despair while there are individual readers ready always to bow to such authority as their reason approves.

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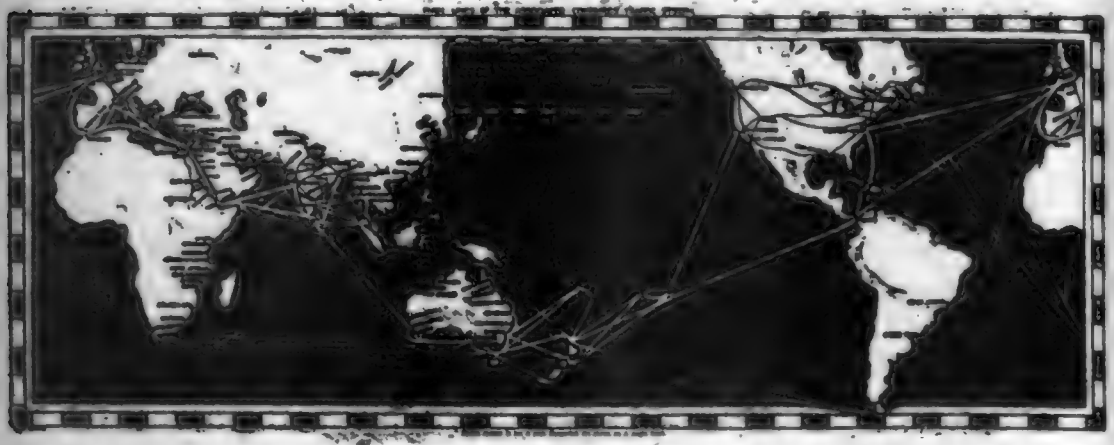

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# Books

## ECONOMICS.

CREDIT-POWER AND DEMOCRACY. By C. H. DOUGLAS and A. R. ORAGE. Cecil Palmer. *7s. 6d.* net.

MR. DOUGLAS, of the air-force, was not quite successful in his "Economic Democracy," for he is not a born writer, but this time, aided by the lucid pen of Mr. Orage, he has written a book which will have to be considered most carefully by all serious thinkers. Impossible here to deal with it as it deserves: we shall hope to treat it editorially, when, and if, we understand the solution he puts forward to the capitalist system. His diagnosis is, we believe, correct. The real evil is financial credit which "corners" money and so controls production and distribution, thus carrying on a sabotage of supply, in this sense controlling real credit which should be a communal right. This is the cause of inflation and high prices —the control of production through the control of credit; thus the solution is the democratisation of credit, not nationalisation, or socialism, or any mere administrative adjustment of a Fabian or Geddes type. Mr. Douglas postulates that capitalism is doomed (not capital), and that we have left the gold standard for good, as

Mr. Kitson has suggested. What then? He sees the real struggle to lie in the problem of who is to control the control, the producer as at present, or the consumer? If the latter, then what the world needs is a modified credit system controlled by the consumer in the interests not of the few but of the whole. We have in this little book an extraordinary suggestive diagnosis and prognosis. When we consider that a year ago the cry was super-production but that the same men are to-day curtailing production to keep up prices, this analysis of an impossible situation deserves the closest and widest scrutiny.

THE COMING REVOLUTION. By GERALD GOULD. Collins. 6s. net.

POET, ex-don, Shakespearean scholar, Mr. Gould in this frank disquisition on the meaning and necessity of revolution states the case in a helpful and cultural fashion. Entirely sincere, he means what he says, and we advise people to study a volume which is absolutely "on time," so to speak, and certainly contains many shrewd truths and exposures. He is of course for a bloodless revolution, indeed he uses the word in its evolutionary sense, politically and economically. The weakness of the book is his apparent belief in an all-round happy England of £500 a year per family. We hope he does not believe this, yet it looks like it; nor does he seem to grasp that the real need is the control of credit, by the consumer instead of by the producer. His remedy is nationalisation. We cannot discuss that here. Suffice it to say that the revolution still seems far off, for what we find to-day is the stage of giant Trustification, or single command of credit, used nationally to compete internationally, which paradoxically is the only bridge now between a Europe which can live and one which cannot. How long will this Trustification period last? That is the point. It is evidenced in Germany, and will be in Russia—if Russia returns to a credit basis, which she will have to in her own despite.

## ESSAYS AND GENERAL LITERATURE.

ASPECTS OF LITERATURE. By J. MIDDLETON MURRY. Collins. 10s. net.

CLEARLY a scholar, the fruits of classic Greece—this is the impression one has of the author of these essays, which are both pleasant and sound. And this is their value. Mr. Middleton Murry has standards and himself sufficient of the creative perception to see that criticism too must be constructive or it is merely opinion and but too often obsession. What he says about the values of literature as in the "last resort moral" is a profound truth which in these days we are apt to lose sight of, even intentionally so; and it is of course for that reason that art is a religion, and the artist essentially an æsthetic seeker. These cameos, they are hardly more, suffer naturally from their compression, for they mostly appeared in newspapers, but they reveal a potentiality we should like to see liberated, as it were, in forms of their own dimensions, for the author is manifestly sane in his judgments and his foot-rule is not temperament.

He has affinities; he is kindly; he has not yet found his full expression, and all through the effect is influenced by a perhaps over-fastidious restraint. On our young men he writes ably, he uses the sieve with admirable deftness. The volume certainly stands out, for it is true criticism, helpful and most necessary. Perhaps the best thing is on Edward Thomas, a felt piece of work, the flattest those on Tschekhof and Rousseau; as he goes backwards his strength grows, and so on Shakespeare he speaks with the right of knowledge. It is a good thing to find this young critic pushing into the cracks of an anarchic art-world the staying-pins of sure foundations.

## FICTION.

The Happy Highways. By Storm Jameson. Heinemann. 9s. net.

The memorable nature of Miss Storm Jameson's novel depends very little upon its setting or its story. For sheer brain power it is superior to most of our contemporary novels put together. The development of four young Yorkshire students at King's College, London, in pre-war years is portrayed with a keen and unerring pen. Their talk, from the angle of progressive thinking, embraced politics, religion, sex, and morals in such a thoroughgoing way that the reader is left breathless by the onrush of ideas and irony. No page is barren of striking thought, no chapter fails to throw light on a question that was not merely a living question before the European *débâcle,* but which is made a living question for us again, revitalised by the author's intellectual energy, whether we desire it or not. Miss Jameson's own faith is revealed—mainly through the astoundingly clever "editing" of her young people's talk—as warm, human, and thoroughly sound:—

> "I believe that there exists in the intellect of the working-class a vigour and freshness that may well bring forth a new Renaissance. For generations crushed under the industrial slavery I believe that it will move when it does move with a mighty bound. Reflect that it has no academic shackles to burst. No spectacled generations tread it down. The world is new to it—a world as full of blossom and fresh stir of life as ever set men's feet wandering in unknown lands, and their throats swelling with the songs of a world at Spring."

Let us admit that there is one objection to the book—it has already been harped upon by the reviewers who prefer the McKenna type. A novel which depends so much on ideas and their discussion is not a work of art, therefore it cannot be a novel. So goes the argument. But if any reader wishes to test Miss Jameson's power of imaginative description, let him turn to that early chapter on the burial of the baby in the moorland snow, or to those concerning the divorce of Margaret Douglass, and he will understand how far she has already gone as a novelist, and how far the conventional "seller" has still to go.

# BOOKS

THE HEADLAND. By C. A. DAWSON SCOTT. Wm. Heinemann. 9s. net.

A NOVEL of Cornwall, told in the "direct method" of narrative. *Leit Motif*, a man's sadism, and his struggle against it. Thus we might label it. It is so nice to have labels. What should we do without them? We might otherwise buy a book that would shock our wives, or put the young feet of our sons upon the primrose way. Well, well. But here is a story to hold old men from the chimney-corner, if not children from their play. The whole movement takes place in three days.

The tragedy of Hendre moves to its end as inevitably, as intensely, and as dramatically as the tale of King Lear. A woman and two men. One a degenerate, but a great figure—the other a great lover. Roma gets her lover in the end, but Hendre overshadows every other figure. He makes the book the really fine tale it is. He moves through its pages a pitiful, a tragic figure, fighting a battle that had been already fought and lost when he was conceived in his mother's body. Look at these two pictures. Hendre, in the grip of his lust, torturing a captive bird. "The flames were breaking out; the old craving was back. Why deny yourself? If only the bird would not struggle. So soft, so helpless, so frightened; and it was struggling, struggling to get away. . . . Yours . . . given into your hand. Foolish to refuse a gift. . . ." But the thing is horrible. And then this. Hendre alone with the dead body of his mother. "'Mother!' he cried, but in the still air the candles burnt without a flicker, and from outside came the monotonous booming of the sea. 'Mother!' he cried, and his knees gave under him. The black darkness of his sorrow spread over the still room, and his voice was a thread of sound. Upon the floor, against the trestles that supported the shell, he lay at last in a night that held no further suffering."

STEPHEN SOUTHWOLD.

BACK TO LIFE. By PHILIP GIBBS. Heinemann. 9s. net.

NEEDLESS to say that Mr. Philip Gibbs, writing about the final stages of the war and its aftermath, is thrillingly interesting; that all his pictures are vivid bits of first-hand actuality; and that the writing itself is of the customary charm. The wrapper of *Back to Life* shows a young man breaking free from the web spun by an old-man spider, so we can assume that the purpose of the author's under-tone is protest. Indeed, this purpose soon becomes apparent, and the events and figures, scenes and implications are skilfully handled with a higher end in view than mere story-telling. The difficulty is that in a necessarily limited *dramatis personæ* all the strange, significant complexes, all the coincidences, which arise as by-products of war, have to be exemplified for the purpose of driving the lesson home. Mr. Gibbs has chosen his personages as well as could be; they are interesting and living men and women; but of necessity typical things happen to them which are rather harrowing to the reader who reads for the story and the happy ending. One recalls in all this concurrence of interrelated actualities the Zolaesque

method of rubbing a subject in, and it is with complete concurrence that one wishes more power to Mr. Gibbs's elbow. Still, it is difficult to produce art and propaganda in the same screed, so if *Back to Life* does not rise to the height of an artistic triumph, such as its author's accomplished work may warrant, it is because of the flame of sincerity which has been lit in him by a close sight of the ruin and horror of war, because of his understanding of the need of underlining the point of view of the combatant and the sufferer in our too-forgetful minds.

## HISTORICAL.

SECRETS OF CREWE HOUSE. By SIR CAMPBELL STUART, K.B.E. Hodder and Stoughton. 7*s.* 6*d.* net.

IN a business-like manner the author narrates the story of enemy propaganda which without a doubt contributed in a positive way to demoralise the German Army in 1918. The whole thing was run as a business, cost remarkably little, and was extraordinarily effective. It eventually took the form of an aerial bombardment of paper; it caused the Italian offensive in June to fail through the giving away of the line of attack; it proved the most insidious weapon at the psychological hour of destiny. Mr. Wells drew up a general basis of policy, and all the work was done with accuracy and skill. Lord Northcliffe's famous letters in *The Times* on the Peace are included in this volume. What does he think now? The Versailles Peace certainly bore small resemblance to the principles of reconstruction outlined in those letters. And though Crewe House promised the enemy much, it cannot be said that Governments have responded. Crewe House brought down the foe, but history will have something to say too if the propaganda turns out to be—merely propaganda.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH. By RAMSAY MUIR. G. Philip and Son. 17*s.* 6*d.* net. Volume I., *The Islands and the First Empire.*

MR. RAMSAY MUIR, Professor of Modern History in the University of Manchester, has planned his history in two volumes, of which this, the first, takes us from zero to the year 1763 and the Treaty of Paris. Although the first part of this "short" history runs to over 800 pages, it is still a brief and well-economised resumption of the theme. Clio never trails her skirts for Mr. Muir, nor stalks with hushened tread; but neither is she a mere spectacled school-marm concentrated upon dates and tags for exams., but a goddess with plan and purpose and destiny unrolled before her; also with a delightful, almost conversational, style of narration, content to get on with her great tale without orotundity or partisanship, to leave elaboration to those who have concluded minuter studies, and to name them for reference. History, in short, not concerned with gossip or scandalous chronicle, but deeply implicated with political and social development and with the part of Britain and the British in the making of the world, the development of sea-power, and the *rôle* which the Anglo-Saxon has played, and is destined to play, in the great drama of mankind. Great crises, reformations, and revo-

lutions thus take their due place in the unrolling of the scroll of social development, and have no undue catastrophic emphasis given them to dehumanise their logical sequence; whilst less conspicuous events are given the weight to which their political resultant entitles them. With the evolution of the British Commonwealth postulated to give the point of view, Mr. Ramsay Muir's analysis of cause and effect naturally leaves many established controversies aside, and, whilst stating basic facts in terse and pleasant English, he does not falter in his pursuit to hunt on cross trails or false scents, nor does he fall into the common fault of historians in assuming too much knowledge in the student. The Short History of the British Commonwealth promises to be an admirable evolutionary synthesis.

## MILITARY.

THE VICTORY AT SEA. By REAR-ADMIRAL W. S. SIMS. J. Murray. 21s. net.

To the public this simply told narrative of the American contribution towards our sea victory will be a revelation, yet it is the truth modestly and generously expressed in all that concerns us. The American contribution was manifold. They sent destroyers, fleets of "chasers," they invented the mine which enabled us to barrage the North Sea and they sent us and laid about 75 per cent. of the great mine-field stretching from Norway to the Orkneys. They invented the listener apparatus. They induced us to employ the convoy system, and took almost a half share in the shipping and escorts necessary. Their part navally was vital to our escape in 1917, and without it we would in all probability have succumbed. This is certainly a book we should read not only as a healthy correction to the erroneous ideas current, but because such a work is a splendid bond of union between the Anglo-Saxon peoples. We have here the submarine war lucidly explained. It is thrilling reading.

## POLITICS.

WHEN LABOUR RULES. By RT. HON. J. H. THOMAS, M.P. Collins. 10s. net.

THE case for Labour is put in this volume with quiet reason and no man could take exception to it. Indeed it is quite what Mr. Lloyd George would claim of the Coalition, so sanctimonious is its atmosphere. But there is the rub. It won't be quite so easy as all that. Labour, so long as it is Trade Unionism, clearly cannot attain to power, especially to-day when more and more the problem is resolving itself into one of world economic pressure in which credit, capitalism and industrialism are at stake, and Labour's need is of a national policy, not a class policy. Mr. Thomas is bracing and thoughtful, and the programme he outlines is without a doubt constructive. Could Labour "nationalise" this policy, it should win. Can it? That is England's problem. But Labour will advance when and as it absorbs the middle-class through the presentation of a policy which can win over the great parasitic clan which lives on snobbery and self-delusion.

## SOCIOLOGY.

THE CHILDREN OF THE SLAVES. By STEPHEN GRAHAM. Macmillan. 12s. net.

IT would be difficult to find a special commissioner better fitted to investigate a great humanitarian question than Mr. Stephen Graham, who has, on his own initiative, studied the great black problem of the United States on the spot. Certainly one does not expect, nor does one find, a tame and colourless official record, but, on the other hand, one is sure of honesty, tact, and consideration from such an expert observer, as well as that graphic power and breadth of purview which only a practised and widely travelled writer can bring to the matter. In all this there is no disappointment; Mr. Graham is studiously careful not to overstate his case; he is, in fact, milder in his conclusions than many northern critics of the South, and expresses a hope that these independent investigations may carry more weight in America than the dreadful things told with passion by partisans. The task the author set himself was to find the fundamental truths of the situation, to hear all sides with dry impartiality, and to present the case of the negro without extenuation or malice. This spirit has been well maintained, but the natural bent of Mr. Graham's mind is for the picturesque, and he makes his whole book a telling bit of travel and sightseeing, full of brilliant glimpses of type and character, with a running accompaniment of fact and opinion like good talk on the way. His tramp through Georgia in the track of Sherman, from Alabama to the sea, is a wonderful bit of review and reconstruction which even those who have no deep interest in the long black and white problem of the South will find pleasure in reading. The horrors of racial antagonism are told with philosophic reserve, and the one illustration, a photograph of a nigger-burning crowd, is evidently put in as a quite necessary exhibit for English readers who do not understand the temper of the South, where such photographs are common enough. *The Children of the Slaves* is a real and useful contribution to contemporary history.

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# Important Notice

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